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SAUDI ARABIAN STUDENTS'
ATTITUDES TOWARD AMERICANS

presented by

Dakheel A L-Dakheelallah

has been accepted towards fulfillment
of the requirements for
MASTER OF ARTS degree in SOCIOLOGY

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "John T. Gullahorn".

Major professor

Dr. John T. Gullahorn

Date June 6, 1984

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SAUDI ARABIAN STUDENTS'
ATTITUDES TOWARD AMERICANS

By

Dakheel A. Al-Dakheelallah

A THESIS

Submitted to
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ABSTRACT

SAUDI ARABIAN STUDENTS' ATTITUDES TOWARD AMERICANS

By

Dakheel A. Al-Dakheelallah

The primary focus of this study was to examine the attitudes held toward Americans by Saudi Arabian students in the U.S. as related to the types of cross-cultural contact the Saudis experienced with Americans.

The literature on international education and cross-cultural contact provided the basis for predicting that favorable attitudes toward Americans were positively related to the degree and duration of contact with Americans, as well as the personal characteristics of the subjects investigated.

The central research questions of this study were: What are Saudi Arabian students's attitudes toward Americans? Do Saudi Arabian students who have relatively extensive social contact with Americans show differences in attitudes toward Americans, compared to Saudis who have less contact? Is there any relationship between Saudi Arabian students' attitudes toward Americans and the Saudis' background characteristics?

Three main hypotheses related to these questions were developed, based on studies of international education exchange conducted over the past generation.

Survey data were collected from 75 Saudi Arabian students at Michigan State University. The findings revealed that their attitudes toward Americans were diverse. They were fairly unfavorable toward American family relations, somewhat favorable toward individual Americans, and slightly favorable toward student-instructor relations at American schools. The relationships between attitudes and selected variables were not conclusively proven, however. The evidence was not entirely consistent for all variables, and the nature of relationship was not clear for all areas of attitudes.

The data led to the conclusion that intensive contact is related to favorability in attitudes under certain conditions. Past experience and reference group provide a basis for favorability toward the attitude object; length of stay, per se, was not found to be related to favorability in attitudes. No strong relationship was found between favorability in attitudes for all the students' personal characteristics.

To the woman who has sacrificed
so much for the good of my life:
my mother, Norah.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION AND STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Today, education is very important to Saudi Arabians. It is a key to modernization, better status, development, improvement. Education is valued by the majority; a Western degree epitomizes the dream of many.

Family members often join together to assist the student in pursuing the "great educational opportunity," study for a U.S. degree, after which it is felt the future of the student and his or her family will improve. Moreover, the government is encouraging education. Thousands of college students were sent abroad during the 1960s and 1970s on government scholarships. At the same time, Saudi Arabian universities were expanded, and many more students are now being sent abroad to create a new generation of educated citizens. It may be assumed, therefore, that the majority of Saudi Arabian students in the U.S. have come here as a result of their personal preference, with governmental support and direction.

Saudi people are not isolated. They are generally well traveled inside Saudi Arabia as well as abroad. The mass media have left no part of the country cut off from the

rest of the world: Radio, television, newspapers, and the influx of thousands of Western and Eastern peoples have brought a new communication dimension to the Saudi people.

Saudi students are in many ways a microcosm of Saudi Arabian society in general, with its cultural framework of values, attitudes, and patterns of social relations.

Western culture is largely viewed as irrelevant. But, with a significant number of students traveling to the U.S. for study, American culture has begun to be introduced.

For Saudi Arabians studying in the U.S., cultural differences and communication barriers have limited effective contact with Americans, and may even have contributed to the formation of negative stereotypes. A broader consideration apparent in such cross-cultural contact is that, while in-group contacts take place in a familiar setting, the experiences of Saudi Arabian students in the U.S. take place in a new and radically different context. These and other aspects of their U.S. environment may influence Saudi students' attitude formation at least as much as do their personal contacts.

Given all these indirect indices of Saudi students' experience in such a cross-cultural context, it is important to study directly the Saudi students' views respecting their presence in another culture. These views can be a sensitive test of attitude formation and change.

To the present time, most studies dealing with Saudi Arabian students' experiences in the United States have

concerned mainly the impact of the sojourn upon the attitudes of students toward their home country's values and practices. The concern of the present study will be oriented more toward the impact of the sojourn upon their perceptions of the host country's values and practices. It will be kept in mind that, as the student leaves his or her own country to study abroad, he or she becomes a potential bridge between the culture in which the student was raised and that which the student has entered through contact with the new environment. Hence, she or he may play the role of "culture carrier" (Eide 1970:32).

The Cultural Background of Saudi Arabian Students

Saudi Arabian culture is well known for its traditional characteristics, reflected in interpersonal relations, institutional life, and centralized government services.

Tribal and Family Ties

The family is the basic social unit. It is the center of loyalty and obligations, and tribal and family ties are the major determinants of status. Family relationships are complex and sensitive. The father and mother are generally considered the main figures of authority.

The extended traditional family places restrictions on the freedom of its members. Certain obligations and expectations, based on moral and religious principles, are

shared between family members.

A great deal of affiliation is needed. Family members are expected to look after each other's welfare. The older brother is expected to watch over his younger brother, and he is expected to continue to concern himself with his sister's affairs even after he or his sister marries. In turn, the daughter is expected to concern herself with the family even after her marriage. In general, younger family members are expected to take care of older members.

This extensive social network is an integral part of everyday family life, and is demonstrated in many different forms. There are daily family gatherings. Visits are made to console a sick member, to offer support or comfort, to share in others' happiness, and for special occasions. Also, the Saudi relies on relatives and friends for advice and guidance in a crisis, and such advice is offered without a specific request. (In contrast, Americans often rely on themselves in a crisis.) In the Saudi Arabian social framework, members of a family are very attached to each other, and each feels responsible for the family.

Hence, the Saudi family can be described as having great frequency of contact among its members -- particularly between close relatives (children and parents, etc.). Intensity of emotional ties and mutual support make the family setting well suited for establishing a relationship of dependency, based on enduring personal obligations to elders.

Personal Contact

Saudi people like to develop feelings about other people, and make affective assessments before beginning to deal with cognitive matters. Trust is developed through such personal contacts. Whereas among Americans friendship is extended to one and all and the emphasis is on informality most of the time, Saudi Arabians display friendliness to select people, and the emphasis is on formality most of the time.

Traditional Education

Traditional education has always been revered in Saudi Arabia. On all levels, education is a state function, centralized under the government. Characteristics of the American educational system that might influence students' performance, particularly the structure of curricula and student-instructor relations, are generally far different from the corresponding characteristics in the Saudi educational system. Instructors are perceived by students in Saudi Arabia as more educated, more qualified, and more expert than the students are in matters of education. This is a result of educational socialization, which has taught them respect for authority.

Purpose of the Study

In almost every case, the attitudes a foreign student holds toward the U.S. and its people are influenced by

various and complex conditions. Most students arrive for study in the United States with high expectations and some preconceived ideas about what life will be like there. Many factors determine whether the student's initial attitude tends to change in a positive direction, a negative direction, or not at all.

The primary concern in the present study is to examine the attitudes of Saudi Arabian students toward Americans, as related to the types of cross-cultural contact between the two groups. In particular, the researcher will seek:

1. to ascertain the relationship between social contact and attitudes of Saudi Arabian students toward Americans;
2. to ascertain the relationship between length of stay in the U.S. and attitudes toward Americans; and
3. to explain the relationship of these attitudes to a number of background characteristics such as age, marital status, academic status, ability to communicate in the language of the hosts, etc.

The hypotheses related to these purposes were developed based on studies of international educational exchange conducted over the past generation.

Specification of Attitude Areas

In order to decide what aspects of attitudes should be covered, earlier studies were examined for leads as to what areas of American life seem important to Saudi students.

From these, aspects relevant to the present study's hypotheses were selected.

These aspects fall into two categories -- individual behavior (e.g., characteristics of Americans as individuals), and personal relations (e.g., family relations; instructor-student relations). Three main aspects of American life have been selected as reflections of the various levels of contact with Americans the students are assumed to have:

1. Attitudes Toward Individual Americans. Individuals evidence certain characteristics at the ordinary level of contact in everyday life. The student, during his sojourn, is involved in many everyday experiences with Americans -- e.g., shopping, renting a home, encountering Americans on the University campus. These activities, to some extent, give the student certain ideas about the people encountered.

2. Attitudes Toward American Family Relations. This category might be assumed to involve the lowest level of interaction with Americans. In fact, both the frequency and the intensity of personal interaction with this aspect of American life are very low.

3. Student-Instructor Relations. This is where the highest level of interaction is assumed, because our subjects are students and the purpose of their stay in the U.S. is academic study. Hence, the student will interact most with Americans in the academic community.

Importance of the Study

The present study will refine propositions about the effects of varying conditions on the attitudinal outcomes of contact, and will suggest issues for future research. The findings may have the following implications.

1. Exploring the patterns of relationship may provide a better understanding of factors shaping the attitudes of Saudis toward Americans.

2. Exploring patterns of relationship may improve the planning policies of the Saudi government in relation to educational missions to the U.S., and may lead to a better understanding of the attitudes, needs, goals, and problems of Saudi students by both the Saudi government and American schools.

One final note: Home-country practices may provide a basis for evaluation of the desirability of host-country practices. Each culture has its own kinds of achievements and problems, and each country has its advantages and shortcomings. Consequently, Saudi students in America, coming as they do from a different culture with unique characteristics, may have a great deal to contribute to the cross-cultural understanding of their hosts.

CHAPTER II

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Allport (1935), discussing the origins of attitudes, suggests four conditions under which attitude formation takes place: integration, differentiation, shock or trauma, and adoption. Development of an attitude by integration results from accumulation of a large number of experiences over a long period of time, all of which influence the individual in a given direction. Attitude development by differentiation may be described as a splitting off of a specific attitude from a more general one. Development of an attitude by shock or trauma may occur as a result of an unusual, violent, or painful experience. Finally, when an attitude is developed by adoption, the individual merely follows the example of friends, teachers, parents, newspapers, or other opinion-modeling agencies.

From another point of view, the origins of attitudes may be seen as a set of subject-object relationships the individual builds up in repeated encounters with objects, persons, groups, social values, and institutions, and through interaction episodes focused on such subjects (Sherif & Sherif 1956:294). Attitudes and changes in them are derived from what is known as a reference group to whom

the individual relates, or a membership group of which the individual regards himself or herself a member. Shaw and Wright (1967) wrote:

Attitudes are learned through interaction with social objects and social events or situations. Since they are learned, attitudes demonstrate the same properties as other learned actions, such as latency and threshold, and they are subject to further change through thinking, inhibition, extinction, fatigue, etc.

In the area of attitude formation and change theory, there is a core of agreement: Attitudes are seen as a reflection of all of the individual's experiences with the surrounding environment.

In general, when we speak of an attitude, we refer not merely to a feeling. An attitude is a combination of cognitive, affective, and behavioral predispositions of individuals toward a physical, abstract, or social object in their environment. The formation of attitudes is the emergence of a set of beliefs, feelings, and tendencies to act toward some object. Alteration or modification of a set of beliefs, feelings, and tendencies to act is a change in attitude. (Franklin 1982:16).

Only a few studies have tested theories of attitude formation and change in cross-cultural contexts (e.g., Scott 1965; Basu and Ames 1967; Barnes 1975). There is no unified theoretical framework in the field, especially in the area of international educational exchange.

Foreign students in the U.S. are especially sensitive to tests of attitude formation and change in cross-cultural studies. Compared to other populations, foreign students in America are affected, apparently, by more factors, and the situations impelling attitude formation and change appear to be more intense.

Attitudes are generally considered to be somewhat stable and enduring, although they may change over time. Cross-cultural researchers must first ascertain conditions which produce stable attitudes before they can determine the factors promoting one valence over another. The conditions under which attitudes are subject to change must also be identified (Basu & Ames 1967:6).

Most relevant to the present study are the social-psychological theorists' congruency, dissonance, and balance theories of attitude formation and change. Theorists such as Heider (1958), Newcomb and Festinger (1957), and Rosenberg (1960) refer to the state of consistency as a major principle of attitude formation: The cognitive, affective, and action components of attitudes must be in equilibrium in order for the individual to avoid anxiety (Petty & Cacioppo 1981:125-48).

Concepts such as "propinquity," "interaction," and "reciprocity" have been examined in further elaborating the attitude formation and change process. Thus, the sojourner's early experiences with the host culture may lead to dissonance, but extensive contact with the hosts

over time may reduce dissonance.

It has been found that experience with objects, people, or events tends to lead to more flexible appraisals and less stereotypical attitudes. Nonetheless, people may prefer others who are similar to themselves on racial and cultural dimensions, just as they prefer others who are similar in terms of attitudes and various other characteristics. "Many programs for the exchange student assume that when students from different countries have the opportunity to know each other, this will lead to more understanding, good will and favorable attitudes toward each other" (Selltitz et al. 1963). However, contact between ethnic groups may lead to an increase or a decrease in intergroup prejudice, depending on the conditions of interaction.

Newcomb (1950), Hofman and Zak (1969), and others have supported the hypothesis that contact with members of different groups results in liking those groups. Newcomb (1950) said: "Other things being equal, people are most likely to be attracted to those in closest contact with them." But Allport (1935), Sherif and Sherif (1956), and Berelson and Steiner (1964) indicated that contact will not necessarily increase intergroup friendship when there is out-group discrimination.

Research findings have been accumulating on the basic aspects of intergroup relations and cross-cultural contacts, and on their short- and long-range social

implications. In a study of the factors associated with the development of cross-cultural social interaction among graduate and undergraduate students at Cornell University, Golden et al. (1956:32) presented the following generalizations of their findings:

1. In a social situation where cross-cultural association and interaction are encouraged and approved, one can expect the more integrated members of the group to develop such contacts.

2. In a social situation such as a college campus, one can expect the friendly, outgoing "joiners," who set a greater value on personal relations and friendship, to engage in cross-cultural interaction.

3. The effectiveness of these two sets of factors in encouraging cross-cultural interaction will be strengthened as the social structure provides contact opportunities.

4. Cross-cultural interaction between American and foreign students does not depend upon political and social ideology and conviction.

5. In a social situation such as a college campus, cross-cultural interaction is less likely to develop among the socially deviant, the disgruntled, the negatively critical, and those who are politically critical.

Masouka (1936) indicated that in Hawaii, knowledge of several languages allows greater opportunity for interaction with people of other races. Simard (1981) wrote: "Language is not only a cue to ethnic difference,

but also the medium which allows for the communication in friendship formation." Tayler and Simard (1973) demonstrated that cross-cultural communication can be as efficient as within-group communication in terms of verbal exchange needed to perform a communication task in a laboratory setting.

Preexisting knowledge of a country seems to have a strong impact on attitude about the country. Such knowledge is considered helpful in improving the conceptual understanding of the various conditions under which the attitude becomes shaped and organized, over time, into relatively stable developmental attainment (Mandelbaum 1956:45).

In terms of duration of stay, a good deal of evidence suggests that foreign students in the United States typically undergo three distinct stages in their attitudes: They start with a positive attitude toward the U.S.; they have problems of adjustment and tend to become disillusioned; and finally, after a time, they gain a deeper, more sophisticated insight, and become increasingly favorable toward the U.S. This finding has been replicated in many studies (e.g., Coelho 1956; Morris 1960; Selltiz et al. 1963), and is discussed (as the "U-curve proposition") in the next chapter.

Attitudes may be influenced by differences between the home culture and the host culture. Often, cultural cues -- such as ways of greeting people, dealing with elderly

groups, or treating family members -- can give rise to admiration or embarrassment by the newcomer. For instance, Indian students are said to be prone to global acceptance or rejection, which may be a matter of national culture rather than of status or economic development (Coelho 1956:55).

A few initial experiences in these areas may produce strong positive or negative attitudes toward the hosts.

CHAPTER III

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Generally speaking, the literature on international education and cross-cultural contact falls into three related categories, as cited by Spaulding and Flack (1976):

1. Studies of the individual, his or her psychological characteristics, and the pre-departure environment. These have identified ethnocentrism, motivation, age, and other cultural and national factors as elements influencing the degree and type of interaction between foreign student and host.

2. Studies of the sojourn -- length, location, activity, adjustment process, personal relationships.

3. Changes in the individual as a result of the sojourn -- measured in terms of information, opinion, attitudes and images, behavior patterns, personality.

The problems encountered by students abroad may be categorized under three major headings: (a) adjustment problems of foreign students in the United States; (b) problems of attitudinal learning -- attitude formation and change; and (c) readjustment problems in the home country after return.

In order to understand the processes of adjustment and

readjustment, one must examine the attitudinal learning upon which those processes rest. Our reviews will deal only with significant work in the field of attitudinal learning as related to attitude formation and change.

Selected Factors Which Influence
the Attitudes of a Foreign Student
in the United States

The attitudes a foreign student has about the United States and its people are influenced by many complex personal and situational factors.

The formation of attitudes begins prior to the student's sojourn to America, and their impact remains after the visit. As Cieslak (1955:138) has written:

Although most foreign students come here for the acquisition of specific skills and knowledges, and not simply to see America, they nonetheless not only come with preconceived notions of life here (frequently stereotyped) but leave with indelible impressions as a consequence of their experiences.

Most foreign students arrive in the U.S. with a positive attitude toward the country. "Marked changes in attitudes toward the United States and toward Americans take place shortly after arrival, but much less change occurs subsequently" (Spaulding & Flack 1976:35).

Given that the foreign student enters the U.S. with a set of attitudes toward the country, a variety of factors determines whether the student's attitudes change in a positive or negative direction, or not at all. Among

several factors identified in the literature are exposure to American culture and people; race discrimination and prejudice; cultural differences; academic situation; and satisfaction with academic work.

In terms of importance to the current study's research problem, the literature may be ordered under three major headings: (a) cross-cultural contact; (b) length of stay; and (c) personal background characteristics and situational factors.

Attitudes and Cross-Cultural Contact

The Importance of Cross- Cultural Contact

Contact is defined as "exposure to norms, values, and identities through both primary interpersonal relationships and secondary transactions with the host country" (Basu & Ames 1967). Person-to-person encounters may be the proper level at which to measure contact. The meeting of people and achievement of some interaction with them, while facilitated by group arrangements, is in the final analysis a private event and deserves separate recognition as a mediating variable in attitude change (Hofman & Zak, 1969). Thus, contact can be measured at two levels: the individual in a situation that might encourage interaction, and the actual occurrence of interaction.

The general assumption involved in various research

studies dealing with the impact of contact or interaction upon attitudinal outcomes is that contact or interaction between members of different cultures leads to favorable attitudes, because such contact enables individuals to know each other better and thereby reduces ethnic prejudice and intergroup tension. As Amir (1969:320) stated:

Contact gives the out-group member an opportunity to see and evaluate life from the in-group member's point of view and thus is held to enable him to appreciate, understand, and perhaps even adopt the latter's way of life.

If an individual spends enough time in the host country to learn about its various dimensions through developing contacts and establishing relationships, she or he is then able to respond more in terms of a differential view and less in terms of a simple stereotype (which, by definition, can be relevant only to one aspect of a nation or its people). The visitor's opportunities for developing contacts and the nature of these contacts determine the quality of the experience abroad; what the sojourner learns about the host country; and, most particularly, the development of lasting relationships with members of that country (Mishler 1965:552).

The newly arrived foreign student is confronted with new and sometimes confusing factors in the environment, and is meeting people who are different in some ways though the same in others. In addition to learning something of the

complexities of another culture, the visitor gains greater awareness of his or her own culture. The sojourner may become newly aware of values and standards implicit in her or his own culture. The host, in contact with the visitor, may also become more attentive to aspects of the host culture that are of importance. The host can become interested in how her or his culture appears to a stranger, and may attempt to see it from this other perspective. The beginnings of solid contact between them could be the mutual exploration of their differences. Thus, contact with the host culture may have consequences not only for the individual's perception of that culture but also for the perception of the individual's own culture. This, however, is not the usual pattern: In order for friendships to develop out of differences, certain preconditions must be met (Mishler 1965:556).

Variables Affecting Contact and Social Interaction

Many factors have been found to be crucial in encouraging contact and assisting social interaction in cross-cultural situations -- contact which may, in turn, affect attitudes. Several key factors involve the ability to communicate in the language of the host country. Language differences can create almost insurmountable barriers to interaction. Foreign students generally indicate that difficulty with English is a source of trouble (Morris 1960; Selltiz et al. 1963; Fisher 1963).

Morris (1960) reported a relationship between language difficulty and extent of social contact for foreign students in the U.S.

Brislin (1968), seeking to demonstrate that contact increases intergroup interaction, tested cross-cultural data from ethnic, religious, and laboratory groups, and found greater interaction with greater physical proximity. Using data from ethnic groups, Brislin found greater out-group interaction when people in a given group know the language of people belonging to other groups.

In evaluating interaction between foreign students and students from the U.S., Penn and Durham (1978:265-6) asked foreign students why they failed to interact with Americans. The participants said that they experienced discomfort related to understanding the language and unfamiliarity with customs in the U.S.

As part of a large study concerned with the influence of personal interaction between foreign students and Americans on the foreign students' attitudes toward various aspects of the U.S. and its people, Selltiz, Hopson, and Cook (1955) found four variables related to most or all of the interaction indices -- type of college, nationality, interaction potential of living arrangements, and interaction potential of other situations.

Another variable facilitating contact with American people, and in turn, the likelihood of having a positive attitude toward them, is type of living arrangement

(Selltitz et al. 1963:205).

Williams (1964), studying background characteristics of students and their impact upon degree of contact, found that males are more likely than females to be exposed to intergroup contact, and that education tends to increase exposure to intergroup contact. Work situations were found to provide the best opportunities for intergroup contact; next are neighborhood situations; and less effective are contact possibilities in organizations.

Hull (1978:99) concluded that "foreign students who were traveled were consistently more likely to report more positive and more frequent encounters with Americans than those who were untraveled." Traveled, in this context, means having indicated prior stays of more than a month in the U.S. or elsewhere.

Shana'a (1978:245) found that when there are few students from a given country on a U.S. campus, these foreign students modify their behavior toward the accepted norms most rapidly. A reasonable corollary conclusion is that when large numbers of students from any one country are present, the likelihood of assimilation and interaction with Americans is reduced.

Spaulding and Flack (1976:289) identified two other major factors affecting "the degree of intimacy of interaction": personality, and nation of origin.

Mishler (1965), studying the development of personal contacts by exchange students in another land --

particularly the U.S. -- found these factors important:

(a) the relative positions of host nation and visitor's nation; (b) cultural differences ("the greater the cultural differences, the greater is the likelihood that barriers to communication will arise and that misunderstandings will occur"); (c) the visitor's relationship to her or his own nation; and (d) the goals of the sojourn.

Mishler (1965) found that students who manifested sociocultural interests before leaving for America -- as indicated by the extent of general preparation for the trip (e.g., reading about America, talking to people who had been there, studying the language) -- tended to interact more with Americans after arrival. Those who engaged in a high degree of participation with Americans also showed, in interviews a year after return to their home countries, that the American trip had had considerable impact on them (Mishler 1965:585).

Attitudinal Results of Personal Contact

Perhaps the most influential variable affecting the attitude of a sojourner, either positively or negatively, is personal contact with people of the host country. As Hull (1978) concludes:

It seems clear that contact with Americans is related to a positive sojourn experience in many ways. Contact in itself may in fact be one of the most crucial variables influencing a foreign student's sojourn experience in the U.S.

Contact with Americans, for a foreigner in this country, occurs in many ways. There is ample opportunity to be exposed to large doses of American life, ranging from watching television to engaging in deep personal relationships. The most obvious opportunity for the foreign student is the classroom setting. The student cannot remain isolated from the new environment in which he or she needs to establish himself or herself, and thus seeks to learn appropriate patterns of behavior.

Shaffer and Dowling (1966) reported that opportunities for cross-cultural interaction are important to foreign students, and that the quality and results of the interaction are important in affecting attitudes. The opportunities provided by student exchange programs, organizational activities, exhibitions, international conferences, etc. are often thought to be effective in changing attitudes, because of the observed effective outcome of persuasion efforts. No technique is as effective as actual contact in this regard.

Selltiz et al. (1956), examining the factors that lead to attitude changes, utilized a before-and-after interview technique to study male foreign students from countries all over the world. Both studies investigated attitudes regarding individual behavior and personal relations of Americans, and broader social patterns (such as freedom of speech and race discrimination). The studies did not

conclusively find that greater interaction with Americans is related to more favorable attitudes toward Americans and American life. They did find that interaction with Americans influenced attitudes toward personal aspects of American life more than attitudes toward broader social patterns. They concluded:

It appears that students who have more extensive interaction with Americans tend to see personal relationships . . . in the U.S. as being closer than do those who interact less with Americans, and to be more approving of such aspects of American life as friendship and family patterns and the characteristics of Americans as individuals. (Selltitz and Cook) → *where? the date + page?*

The design of the Selltitz and Cook studies does not allow for conclusions to be drawn about causal relationships or developmental hypotheses regarding interaction-attitude linkage.

Pool (1965), reviewing the effects of travel contacts on national and international images, described the impact of contact on favorability toward the host country as a complex matter, dependent on complex conditions: (a) the individual's initial psychological adjustment and interpersonal relationships; (b) the moment in the cycle of the individual's stay at which the measure of attitude is taken, including whether the stay is cut short and how the traveler views her or his experience in retrospect; and (c) the extent of cultural differences between the host and the home country (as a "second derivative"). Pool added that it

can be predicted that those individuals who have the most and the deepest contacts with the host population will be most favorable toward it, but it isn't certain to what extent pushing people who wish to avoid such contacts into having them will produce the same result.

Basu and Ames (1967) reported that contact is the important factor in foreign students' formation and change of attitudes toward the host country. For any given level of after-arrival contact, the degree of prior-to-arrival contact was positively associated with the formation of positive attitudes toward the U.S.; but after-arrival contact was found to be the factor most conducive to positive attitudes (Basu & Ames 1967:15).

Amir's (1969) review of studies on the effect of intergroup contact on changing attitudes and ethnic relations came up with the following major generalizations:

1. There is evidence in the literature that contact between members of different ethnic groups tends to produce changes in attitude between these groups.

2. The direction of change depends largely on the conditions under which the contact has taken place: "Favorable" conditions tend to reduce prejudice, while "unfavorable" ones may increase prejudice and intergroup tension.

3. A change may be produced not only in the direction of the attitude but also in the intensity of the attitude (or in other not-yet-explored dimensions).

4. In many cases where attitude change results from the contact situation, the change is limited to a certain specific aspect of the attitude (e.g., toward work situation), but is not generalized to other aspects. In respect to the initial attitude, contact between ethnic groups may intensify the initial attitude of the individual; or the intensity of an individual's initial attitude may exert decisive influence on the outcome of the ethnic contact (Amir 1969:337-8).

Ibrahim (1970) concluded that "the attitudes of Arab students toward Americans seem to be a function of: first, the student's perception of Americans' attitudes toward the Arabs; second, the extent to which the students interact with Americans in the variety of everyday situations. Those who interact less reported less favorable attitudes than the highly interacting students."

Chang (1972) concluded that a Chinese student's attitudes toward the United States are positively associated with degree of contact with Americans and negatively associated with degree of authoritarianism.

In an extensive study of the religious attitudes of Saudi Arabian students in the United States, Kershaw (1973) found that Saudi students had become less faithful in observing Muslim rules during their time in the U.S. However, their commitment to Islam and to religious values remained strong; in fact, they professed having become more committed to Islamic values since being in the U.S. The

contact of Saudi Arabian respondents with Americans was not extensive, but they tended to be critical of the effectiveness of Christianity in providing a moral dynamic for U.S. society (Kershaw 1973:172-3).

The impact of studying in the U.S. on the attitudes of Saudi Arabian students toward some traditional Arabian cultural values was studied by Al-Banyan (1974:95), who concluded:

Neither exposure nor adjustment seemed to have much effect on students' attitudes toward their traditional cultural values. Some relationships were found between length of stay and change in students' attitudes, but the evidence was not entirely consistent and the nature of the relationship was not clear.

In a study of Venezuelan students in the U.S., Bustamante (1978:87-9) concluded that "contact was negatively related to attitude toward the host country. That is, the more contact the Venezuelans have with the host culture, the more unfavorable is their attitude."

Obeidy (1979) concluded that Saudi Arabian students in the U.S. with high degrees of interaction with Americans and long periods of stay had less favorable attitudes toward the traditional Arabian family ideology. These results were most prevalent among young, unmarried undergraduate students from urban backgrounds. Lever (1982:33) concluded that the process of attitudinal change, as related to cross-cultural contact between Nigerian graduate students and Americans, is both gradual and

continuous. Attitudes about the U.S. had changed since arrival, and were either neutral or positive.

A Note of Caution

Amir (1969) cautioned against overgeneralizing from such studies as those cited previously. It would be naive to assume that intergroup contact always produces the same results, Amir wrote; investigators have generally expected to prove a reduction of prejudice, but it does not necessarily follow that these results are typical for real social situations (Amir 1969:337).

Similarly, Selltiz et al. (1963) warned that the assumption of increasing favorability toward the host country as the level of contact increases is oversimplified and overly optimistic.

Pool (1965) comments that findings on the effects of contact on favorability toward the host country are actually contradictory, with some studies showing decreased favorability (Riegl 1953; Watson & Lippitt 1955; Selltiz et al. 1963).

It seems safe to conclude that there is an indication of a relationship between contact and attitude, but it is unclear whether contact with the hosts causes a positive or negative attitude, or, conversely, attitude toward the hosts determines how easy it is for extensive contact to occur.

It may be that the causal relation obtains to both directions; in any case, it seems clear that whatever stimulates the development of friendship between visitors and hosts will have a favorable impact on the reactions of the visitors to the total experience. (Eide 1970:41)

Attitudes and Length of Stay

Length of stay is a confirmed, significant variable in adjustment problems, academic performance, decision to stay abroad, satisfaction with training, alienation, and marginality. Coelho (1968) asserted that the duration of a foreign educational experience is crucial to cultural learning. Siegel (1956:54) emphasized that the element of time is an important variable in the sojourn of foreign students: It takes time for the student "to come to terms with the requirements of life in the host culture." Hull (1978) found more satisfaction and involvement in the U.S. culture among foreign students whose stay in the United States had been longer. Several researchers have suggested that if the length of stay is sufficient, it allows for the unfolding of several developmental stages in cultural learning (e.g., Siegel 1956; Coelho 1958; Selltitz et al. 1963).

Stages in Attitudes: The U-Curve

Many researchers have independently discovered a U-curve pattern of adjustment and attitudinal change. A typical description of such a pattern:

A good deal of evidence suggests that foreign students typically go through a cycle in their feelings toward the host country. Starting out with highly enthusiastic reactions, they are likely to become more critical after a few months; a period of relatively negative feelings is likely to be followed by a more favorable evaluation, though the initial rosy view may not be recaptured. (Selltitz et al. 1963)

The same pattern has been described more recently as a well-accepted fact by Pool. The visiting student generally starts out with a very positive attitude toward the United States, but problems of adjustment lead to disillusionment during the first year. Later, as the student gains deeper insight into the U.S. culture, he or she becomes more favorable toward the country.

Even more recently, the U-curve has been supported by some studies and rejected by others. Some have even found the curve to be in the reverse direction. Coelho (1968), in his study of Indian students, found the U-curve pattern of attitudes. Morris (1960), studying attitude change with a multinational sample (55 countries), found general support for the U-curve, though not at a statistically significant level. Davidson (1970) found a bell-shaped pattern of favorable attitudes, depending on the length of time Middle Eastern students had lived in the U.S. A study of Venezuelan students in the U.S. by Bustamante (1978:64) found a U-shaped pattern. Finally, the pattern was partially supported by a study of Chinese students in the

U.S. (Chang 1972).

Becker (1968) proposed two distinct patterns of attitudinal change on the part of foreign students in the U.S.: the U-curve pattern for students from highly developed countries, and a reverse pattern for representatives of underdeveloped countries. Spaulding and Flack (1976) concurred.

Gullahorn and Gullahorn (1963) described a "W-curve of acculturation and reacculturation." They wrote that foreigners not only experience a U-curve pattern in the process of attitude change toward the host country, but also go through the same pattern of attitude change toward their home country, and face readjustment problems when they return home.

In the studies reviewed, there is no clear estimation of some crucial parameters of the time stages in attitude change -- especially the duration of each stage. Problems remain concerning criteria for delineating each phase of the U-curve pattern. More research is needed to explore other aspects of the U-curve proposition.

Regardless, it is worth mentioning that length of stay is considered to have an important impact on attitude formation and change in two respects:

1. It has a direct, observed impact on attitude -- that is, an individual who has an opportunity to live in a new and different culture over a period of time may be motivated toward re-evaluation based on participant

observation.

2. It allows sufficient time to realize and observe the expected influence of contact on attitudes.

In general, one can conclude that the longer the stay in the U.S., the more favorable will be the student's attitudes.

Attitudes and Personal Background Characteristics

In attempting to determine variables related to attitudinal outcome of foreign students toward the U.S., several studies have taken a composite view of personal characteristics which may account for such attitudes. Sewel and Davisen (1956), in their study of Scandinavian students at the University of Wisconsin, indicated that students with extensive contact with Americans tend to have a good command of English, to have high socioeconomic status at home, to have had more prior contact with Americans, and to specialize in liberal arts rather than applied sciences. Many of these variables tended to exert strong influence on the degree of favorable or unfavorable attitudes toward various aspects of American life.

Dubois (1956) found that some of the important factors in the foreign student's formation of attitudes about the U.S. were: (a) the individual's self-esteem; (b) how firmly pre-existing attitudes were anchored; (c) the cultural distance between the country of origin and the host

country; and (d) the status of relations between the country of origin and other countries.

Another factor which can effect positive change is a positive academic experience -- either academic success or satisfaction with future career plans. Gullahorn and Gullahorn (1963) report that when foreign students interact more with professionals in their fields, they are more satisfied with the sojourn.

Ibrahim (1970) found that Arab students' personal background and the variety of experience to which they were exposed, in the U.S., affected their attitudes toward Americans through "perceived attitudes" and "interaction."

Becker (1968) suggested that the preservation of basic religious and cultural values eases readjustment upon return home. Longer-term students (over two years) showed less patriotism and increased favorability toward the United States, but often showed hostility toward both home and host countries.

Dalton (1972:11) found that age was more important in determining students' attitudes toward the U.S. than were length of residence in the U.S., geographic origin, or sex. Older students generally held more positive attitudes toward the United States than did younger students.

Generally speaking, studies of foreign students in the U.S. have been limited to immediate questions of adjustment, not necessarily theories of attitude formation and change. Further, as Spaulding and Flack (1976) reported

in a systematic summary of research on foreign students in the U.S., many studies are limited by various methodological restrictions (such as dealing with students from only one country or in only one academic field). These limitations make attempts to generalize findings difficult at best.

The purpose of all the research examined here is to measure changes in attitudes resulting from experiences of students living away from their home countries. The formation and change of attitudes turns out to be an outcome not only of exposure to the new culture and the duration of such exposure, but also of the situational factors and personal characteristics surrounding such exposure, and the cultural aspects of the original versus the new setting.

The significance and meaning of our culture becomes clear only when we realize that other cultural choices may be made, and indeed have been made by other people. Thus, in a study of the experiences of foreign students in contact with American values, the researcher could focus on what values from the foreign students' home culture become most important to them in the light of their American experience. The changes that might result from interaction and perception could reveal the underlying power of the student's culture itself.

CHAPTER IV

RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND HYPOTHESES

Research Questions

After some preliminary work, the central questions of this research were formulated as:

1. What are Saudi Arabian student attitudes towards Americans?
2. Do Saudi Arabian students who have had relatively extensive social contact with Americans show differences in attitudes toward Americans compared to those who have had less extensive contact with Americans?
3. Is there any relationship between Saudi Arabian students' attitudes toward Americans and their background characteristics?

Answering the first question is a descriptive problem concerned with the views and feelings of Saudi students toward the host country's people. The other questions focus on relating the students' attitudes toward this issue to background variables of a personal and social nature. These include variables pertinent to the present milieu: personal characteristics (e.g., age, marital status, academic status) and conditions of the stay in the United States

(e.g., amount of contact, academic satisfaction, and language facility).

Working Hypotheses

1. Attitude-Contact Hypothesis

Contact between members of different cultures usually results in a more favorable attitude of each toward the other. Hence, the more Saudi Arabian students have contact with Americans, the more they tend to have favorable attitudes towards Americans.

2. Attitude-Length of Stay Hypothesis

The literature on cross-cultural contact focusing on foreign students in the United States generally has been based on the assumption that attitude change lessens with duration of stay. The data in such studies point to three orientation phases, which seem to display a U-shaped curve of favorability toward Americans. For the present study, it is hypothesized that Saudi Arabian students who have stayed longer in the U.S. tend to be more favorable in their attitudes toward Americans than do those who have stayed in the U.S. for shorter periods.

3. Attitude-Personal Characteristics Hypothesis

The literature on foreign students in the United States suggests that foreign students' reactions to their experiences in the host country are likely to be influenced

by a composite of personal-background characteristics. Along these lines, the following set of hypotheses has been developed for the present study:

A. Attitude-Age of Student: Young Saudi Arabian students have more favorable attitudes toward Americans than do older Saudi students.

B. Attitude-Marital Status: Unmarried Saudi Arabian students have more favorable attitudes toward Americans than do married Saudi students.

C. Attitude-Academic Status: Undergraduate Saudi Arabian students have more favorable attitudes toward Americans than do graduate Saudi students.

D. Attitude-Ability to Communicate: Saudi Arabian students with better ability to communicate in English tend to interact more with Americans, and in turn tend to have more favorable attitudes toward Americans, than do those with poorer ability to communicate in English.

CHAPTER V

METHODOLOGICAL PROCEDURES AND TECHNIQUES

As stated earlier, the aim of the present study is to explore Saudi Arabian students' attitudes toward Americans. This does not necessarily require extensive historical data, an intensive examination of ongoing social interactions, or any type of experimental treatment. The type of information sought in the present study can be obtained from the subjects directly. The survey method employed allows the use of quantitative analysis.

It became apparent during the early stages of this study that the survey method would be most appropriate for collecting well-defined quantitative data on the Saudi Arabian student population in the U.S. The strength of the survey method lies in its potential for quantification, replication, and generalizability to a larger population within known limits of error. With other methods, the limits of generalizability are unknown. (Warwick & Liniger 1975:11).

The sample size and tools for collecting data are pretty much determined by available human resources and time limitations. The questionnaire technique was chosen,

instead of the interview, as a means of gathering information. Besides taking into account time and resource limitations, this choice was made because of the possibility that students might be reluctant to express unfavorable opinions to interviewers. A sample, rather than the entire Saudi Arabian student population in the U.S., will be surveyed.

Instrumentation

The measurement of Saudi Arabian students' attitudes toward Americans in relation to the variables selected for study was obtained from responses by a selected, conveniently available sample of Saudi students in the United States to the questionnaire designed for the present study (see Appendix I). This questionnaire is an outgrowth of reviews of questionnaires and interviews used in similar studies (Selltitz et al. 1963; Ibrahim 1970); numerous informal interviews with Saudi students; and pretests of initial drafts.

The major areas to be covered in the questionnaire include information about the student's social contact with Americans and about attitudes toward Americans. In addition, certain background information about the student is collected in order to allow comparison of the findings with other studies, and to take account of the characteristics that might be expected to influence the student's attitudes.

1. The Contact With Americans (CWA) Scale

Contact, for students as sojourners in this country, may take different forms. There is ample opportunity for the student to be exposed to large doses of American life through means varying from mass-media consumption to involvement in deep personal relationships (which are difficult to measure).

The data in the present study are ranked on a number of relevant indicators, ranging from the lowest level of contact -- stopping and talking with Americans -- to the highest level of contact -- traveling together with Americans. Since these indicators are numerous and interrelated, they have been combined into a summary index designed to provide a crude rating of contact, called the Index of Contact. This index includes two patterns of contact: (a) primary contact -- contact through interpersonal relationships (see Part IV of the questionnaire, items 21-25); and (b) secondary contact -- contact through mass-media consumption (see Part IV, items 26-28).

2. The Attitudes Toward Americans (ATA) Scale

This scale has four subsections.

A. Americans as individuals. The indicators of this measurement are a number of items containing lists of traits that might be used to describe individuals in different social situations. Students were asked about

their feelings toward, and evaluations of, Americans in respect to these traits. (See questionnaire Part V, items 29-33).

B. Family relationships. The indicators here are questions dealing with the strength of emotional ties, respect, and sense of obligation among family members in respect to various aspects of American family life. (See questionnaire Part VI, items 34-42; and Part IX, item 49a.)

C. Instructor-student relationships. Indicators in this subsection are items asking the student to describe such relationships in terms like extent of formality, respect, personal interest, and general ease of getting along together. (See questionnaire Part VII, items 43-48; and Part IX, item 49b.)

D. Overall attitudes index. The above-mentioned scales were combined into a single summary index of attitudes, called "overall attitudes."

Assessing strength of attitudes. To measure attitude strength, a series of independent questions was asked, each of which is thought to reflect some general, underlying attitude. The Likert method was employed. The total number of items agreed with is taken as a measure of attitudinal strength in respect to each measured area of attitude. This method is based on the assumption that an overall score, based on responses to many items reflecting a particular variable, provides a reasonable measure of the variable (Babbie 1983:380).

Since a major purpose of the present study is to ascertain relationships between the subject's contact with Americans and her or his attitudes, questions regarding the subject's pre-arrival impressions of Americans are included in order to furnish background for such ascertainment. (See questionnaire Part II, item 15.)

3. Measurement of Related Characteristics

Many influences might contribute to differences among students in their reactions to the people of the U.S. It is not possible to systematically control all such influences, but information about a number can be collected.

The influences may be classified under two general headings: (a) personal characteristics of the student such as age, academic status, marital status, etc.; and (b) conditions of the stay in the U.S. -- e.g., contact, ability to communicate in English, academic satisfaction, length of stay, etc.

Sampling Procedures

The achievement of an adequate sample involved traditional research standards as well as special problems due to the population involved.

The Sample

Because of time limitations, it was decided to utilize the closest live persons for the purpose of testing the hypotheses and answering the research questions. This

sample was all Saudi Arabian students at Michigan State University (MSU), East Lansing, Mich., carrying passports issued by the Saudi Arabian government, who are in the United States with the primary purpose of going to school. Since Saudi Arabian students in the U.S. are distributed randomly by their sponsors to all American academic institutions attended by Saudi students, it is assumed the sample will to some extent be representative of the Saudi Arabian student population in the United States. It is not assumed, however, that the findings at MSU will generalize to all Saudi Arabian students in the United States.

To obtain a complete listing of students at MSU who meet the population definition, the major source of information about Saudi Arabian students in the U.S. was used: the Saudi Arabian Educational Mission to the United States in Houston, Texas. A complete list of the 100 Saudi students at MSU during the fall term of 1983 was obtained. Information on their fields of study and personal addresses and phone numbers were also gathered.

Data Collection

The primary data for the present study were obtained from information collected via anonymous questionnaire. The questionnaire was administered primarily by mail. This was assumed to be adequate because most of the questions were simple and few were retrospective.

Several procedures were utilized to gain the

cooperation of the subjects. A cover letter was attached to the questionnaire to secure frankness; out of politeness; and to provide certainty about the reason for the study. It was basically a brief appeal to the subject urging him or her to fill out the questionnaire and mail it back as soon as possible. The subjects were told briefly what the study was about; the importance of the study was outlined; the subjects were told why their cooperation was needed; and anonymity was guaranteed. Directions on how to fill out the questionnaire were provided where needed. A time limit for returning the questionnaires was indicated. The letter was signed by the researcher.

A follow-up letter was sent to all subjects, with a stronger appeal for cooperation. The letter referred to the previous mailing, stressed the importance of the study, thanked those who immediately responded, and appealed once more for an answer from non-respondents. A copy of the questionnaire was enclosed.

Data Analysis: The Selective Use of Statistical Techniques

Out of 100 questionnaires distributed, 76 were received by January, the deadline set for accepting the questionnaires. One incomplete questionnaire was discarded as improper, the 75 remaining questionnaires were processed for analysis.

The information on each questionnaire used was edited, coded, and punched on a card for computer processing. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was employed in the analysis. For the purposes of description, frequency distribution, percentage, mean and standard deviation, range was used as a standard statistical technique for comparison and indication of differences. For the purpose of ascertaining relationships among variables, chi-square and gamma were used as measures of association. Both are useful in testing independence between variables. Chi-square, in particular, is a test of significance frequently used in the social sciences. It is most appropriate for nominal data, while gamma is a more appropriate measure of association and strength for ordinal variables (Babbie 1983:409).

The questions for each area measured had several alternative answers. These were coded with numbers ranging from 1 to 4 for the Contact Scale III and the Attitudes Toward Individual Americans Scale. A high score indicated high level of contact or favorability.

The responses were coded with numbers from 1 to 5 for Attitudes Toward American Family Relations and Attitudes Toward Student-Instructor Relations VII, with the exception of item 35 (1-4) and item 47 (2-5). A high score indicated favorability.

To measure their English ability, students were asked to rate their difficulties and proficiencies in English as

a second-language competence. They responded to a series of items regarding specific difficulties they encountered in contact with Americans. Responses to the three main items were made on a 4-point scale, defined at one end as much difficulty (1), and at the other end as no difficulty (4).

For general proficiency in English, students were asked to describe their proficiency in the English language (in terms of conversation, reading, understanding, and giving lectures) as very good (4), good (3), fair (2), or poor (1). The high end indicated high proficiency. One aspect of language proficiency, writing, was not included, because it was thought this aspect does not have much importance for the research problem and hypotheses of the present study.

Responses for each area measured were summed, and the observed scores of the respondents were divided into thirds to obtain high, medium, and low scores. This was done for both independent and dependent variables.

When assessing the relationship between length of stay and attitude change, the line of research of previous studies (Selltiz 1953; Coelho 1959; and others) was followed. Saudi Arabian students were classified into four groups on the basis of the number of years they had stayed in the U.S. The attitudes of Saudi students in the four groups were compared by using the chi-square test and analysis of variance, where needed. Further comparison was made between after-arrival and pre-arrival attitudes.

The description of a given statistical association as weak, moderate, or strong corresponded to the absolute values of gamma of less than ± 20 or ± 40 or above, respectively.

Differences between subgroups were reported generally only when they were significant at at least the 0.05 level. Any deviation from this rule was for the sake of comparison only.

CHAPTER VI

FINDINGS

This chapter presents the study's findings and an analysis of them. In the discussion that follows, the focus will be on three aspects of the research findings.

First, it is assumed that certain personal characteristics of the student and conditions of the student's stay in the United States are necessary preconditions for satisfactory contact and influence upon their attitude organization. While primary attention is given to the characteristics of Saudi Arabian students and the conditions of their stay in the United States, their academic satisfaction and ability to communicate in the English language will be considered briefly. This will be followed by a detailed discussion of the students' contact with Americans and related variables. Attention will be given to the variables found to be significantly related to maximum contact with Americans.

Second, the attitudes of Saudi Arabian students toward Americans as indicated in questionnaire responses -- attitudes toward Americans as individuals, toward American family relations, and toward student-instructor relations -- will be considered in some detail.

Third, the hypotheses will be tested in relation to typical patterns of student attitudes and selected factors.

Finally, a summary of findings and conclusions, and implications based on the summary, will be presented.

Saudi Students' Characteristics and Conditions of Stay in the United States

Saudi Students' Characteristics

As Table 6.1 shows, 46 students (61 percent) were between 20 and 30 years of age, and 29 students (38.7 percent) were between 30 and 40 years of age. Fifty-eight students (77.3 percent) were male, and 17 (22.7 percent) were female. Of the 75 students, 65 (86.7 percent) were married; only 10 (13.3 percent) were single. Among the sample, 61 (81.3 percent) were at the graduate level of education, and the remaining 14 (18.7 percent) were at the undergraduate level.

In terms of their living accommodations, 42 students (56 percent) were living off-campus, and 33 (44 percent) were on-campus. In terms of housing arrangements, 65 (86.7 percent) were living with their families, 9 (12 percent) were living alone, and only one lived with an American family.

The length of stay in the United States varied from less than one year to more than four years.

TABLE 6.1

DISTRIBUTION OF THE SUBJECTS ACCORDING TO
VARIOUS PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS
AND CONDITIONS OF STAY

Characteristics	No. of Cases	Percentage
<u>Age Group</u>		
20-30	46	61.3
30-40	<u>29</u>	<u>38.7</u>
TOTAL	75	100.0
<u>Sex</u>		
Male	58	77.3
Female	<u>17</u>	<u>22.7</u>
TOTAL	75	100.0
<u>Marital Status</u>		
Single	10	13.3
Married	<u>65</u>	<u>86.7</u>
TOTAL	75	100.0
<u>Income</u>		
Above Average	7	9.3
Average	54	72.0
Below Average	<u>13</u>	<u>17.3</u>
TOTAL	75	100.0
<u>Rural vs. Urban Background</u>		
Large City	51	68.0
Small Town or Village	<u>24</u>	<u>32.0</u>
TOTAL	75	100.0
<u>Academic Status</u>		
Graduate	61	81.3
Undergraduate	<u>14</u>	<u>18.7</u>
TOTAL	75	100.0

TABLE 6.1--continued

Characteristics	No. of Cases	Percentage
<u>Length of Stay in the</u>		
<u>United States (years)</u>		
Less than One Year	12	16.0
One-two Years	18	24.0
Three-four Years	27	36.0
More Than Four Years	<u>18</u>	<u>24.0</u>
TOTAL	75	100.0
<u>Type of Accomodations</u>		
On-campus	33	44.0
Off-campus	<u>42</u>	<u>56.0</u>
TOTAL	75	100.0
<u>Housing Arrangements</u>		
Alone	9	12.0
With My Family	65	86.7
With American Family	<u>1</u>	<u>1.3</u>
TOTAL	75	100.0

Conditions of Stay in the United States

Saudi Arabian students come to study in the United States for a variety of reasons. Regardless of the purpose of the visit, success depends to a large degree on how well the student can adjust to the new environment and communicate with those around him or her, so that satisfactory learning may take place. Satisfaction with academic work and the ability to communicate in the language of the hosts correspond to two major purposes for coming to the United States: the acquisition of specific knowledge, skills, and techniques; and the facilitation of understanding and goodwill.

Ability to Communicate in English and Academic Satisfaction

In most cases, Saudi Arabian students report that they communicate in the English language fairly satisfactorily, as measured by our scale, with an overall mean score of 19.80 and a standard deviation of 4.30. (See Table 6.2.) The aspects of communication that were perceived as most difficult were the ability to express oneself in English ($M = 2.56$, $SD = 0.98$), understanding Americans when they speak ($M = 2.79$, $SD = 0.90$), and hesitation to talk to Americans or ask them questions because of fear of misunderstanding ($M = 2.75$, $SD = 0.93$). In addition, the academic aspects of English facility in which the students described themselves

as fairly low in ability were conversation ($M = 2.89$, $SD = 0.82$) and giving speeches ($M = 2.50$, $SD = 0.92$). In contrast, the respondents described themselves as very good in reading ($M = 3.09$, $SD = 0.72$) and understanding ($M = 3.21$, $SD = 0.72$). Considered together, the results for all aspects of English ability explored seem consistent.

From personal experience and observations, it seems

TABLE 6.2

STUDENTS' ABILITY TO COMMUNICATE IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE
AS REPRESENTED BY MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS (SD)
OF RESPONSES TO THE ITEMS IN THE EA SCALE

Item Content*	Items	
	Mean	SD
<u>Type of Communication</u>		
Expressing oneself in English	2.56	0.98
Understanding Americans when they speak	2.79	0.90
Hesitation in talking or asking questions in English	2.75	0.93
<u>Proficiencies</u>		
Conversation	2.89	0.82
Reading	3.09	0.72
Understanding	3.21	0.72
Lectures (giving speech)	2.50	0.92

Overall Mean Score for Ability to Communicate in English Scale = 19.80

Standard Deviation = 4.30

Range = 19.80

No. of Cases = 75

*See Appendix I for complete statements of the items (Questionnaire Part III).

that Saudi Arabian students are troubled by two areas of English ability: expression and speech. Hull (1977) indicated such problems in his case study of Saudi students. The problem is especially severe with English pronunciation, but does not reflect what might be considered to be a lack of proficiency in academic language. At one time or another, most of the students in the present study encountered problems in one or more of these areas. This might be a result of the lack of practice with English due to the small amount of contact they have with Americans.

Although they indicated problems with English, the Saudi Arabian students, as a group, were highly satisfied with their academic work. In the survey, almost half (48 percent) were satisfied; 18 percent were very satisfied; 7 percent were somewhat satisfied; and only 2 percent were dissatisfied.

As might naturally be predicted, the relationship between the ability to communicate in English and satisfaction with academic work is highly significant at the 0.03 level. The strength of the relationship is reasonably strong ($\gamma = -0.56$), which means, according to our scale, that as difficulty in English decreases, the level of satisfaction increases. Table 6.3 shows the relationship between the two variables. Interestingly, the results imply that it is quite possible to perform at a

high academic level even though one experiences some difficulty in English.

Contact with Americans and Related Variables

The index of contact used was a composite measure of diverse kinds of contact, ranging from free time spent with Americans to frequency in reading American publications or watching television programs, and their nature. Overall, it seems that contact between Saudi students and Americans generally took place in structured contexts.

On the verbal dimension (Table 6.4), Saudi Arabian students sometimes talked with Americans about such subjects as academic courses, family life, and political or

TABLE 6.3

SATISFACTION WITH ACADEMIC WORK AND ABILITY TO COMMUNICATE IN ENGLISH

Level of Satisfaction	to Communicate in English			
	Low	Medium	High	No. of Cases
Very satisfied	5.6	44.4	50.0	18
Satisfied	25.0	39.6	35.4	48
Somewhat satisfied	71.4	28.6	0.0	7
Dissatisfied	50.0	50.0	0.0	2
TOTALS	19	30	26	75

chi-square = 13.85

df = 6

gamma = -0.56

sig. = 0.03

TABLE 6.4

PRIMARY CONTACT WITH AMERICANS: FREQUENCY (Fre.) AND PERCENTAGE (Pctg.)
OF RESPONSES ON VERBAL CONTACT--HOW OFTEN SAUDI STUDENTS
TALKED WITH AMERICANS ABOUT VARIOUS SUBJECTS

Subjects	Never		Seldom		Sometimes		Often	
	Fre.	Pctg.	Fre.	Pctg.	Fre.	Pctg.	Fre.	Pctg.
Academic coursework	10	13.3	16	21.3	29	38.7	20	26.7
Literature or art	29	38.7	26	34.7	16	21.3	4	5.3
Family life	10	13.3	16	21.3	36	48.0	13	17.3
Social, economic, or political problems	13	17.3	19	25.3	33	44.0	10	13.3
Intellectual or religious matters	9	12.0	16	21.3	39	52.0	11	14.7

religious matters, but they rarely had contact in terms of the behavioral dimension, such as visiting each other or traveling together (Table 6.5).

One of the most striking aspects of Saudi Arabian students' contact with Americans is the preponderance of secondary contacts -- reading and watching television, especially news programs (Tables 6.6 and 6.7). It is possible that reading and television give Saudis more information about the host country than does direct contact.

On the other hand, the contact of these students with other Saudi Arabians or Arabs was much more extensive and constant than with Americans or other foreign students. The majority spent most of their free time in the company of fellow nationals, about half of it with Arabs. They spent less time in the company of Americans, and almost none with non-American non-Arabs (Table 6.8).

It appears that the Saudi Arabian students have had little association with Americans on a deep social level. The overall mean score, as measured by the present study's index, was 49.70 (SD = 10.15). The collective responses of participants indicated that actual social contact with Americans fell below the midpoint of the original 4-point extent scale, indicating "low frequency of contact."

Certain background characteristics and situational factors might contribute to the variation of contact levels among the sample. The type of contact with Americans Saudi

TABLE 6.5

PRIMARY CONTACT WITH AMERICANS: FREQUENCY (Fre.) AND PERCENTAGE (Pctg.)
OF RESPONSES ON BEHAVIORAL CONTACT WITH AMERICANS--HOW OFTEN
SAUDI STUDENTS WERE INVOLVED IN SOCIAL INTERACTION
WITH AMERICANS

Types of Contact	Never		Rarely		Sometimes		Often	
	Fre.	Pctg.	Fre.	Pctg.	Fre.	Pctg.	Fre.	Pctg.
Stopping and talking when they meet	8	10.7	25	33.3	29	38.7	13	17.3
Playing games, sharing coffee or meals together	18	24.0	28	37.3	21	28.0	8	10.7
Attending movies, concerts, sports events, or going to public services or economic establishments together	35	46.6	26	34.7	10	13.3	4	5.3
Getting together on special occasions: Thanksgiving, Christmas, etc.	34	45.3	18	24.0	19	25.3	4	5.3
Having informal chats together in the American's home or in the respondent's home	25	33.3	25	33.3	24	32.0	1	1.3
Having dinner or a party together either at home or elsewhere	22	29.3	26	34.7	21	28.0	6	8.0
Traveling together	58	77.3	11	14.7	4	5.3	2	2.7
Visiting American families	17	22.7	27	36.0	18	24.0	13	17.3
Participating in campus activities	50	66.7	16	21.3	5	6.7	4	5.3
Attending meetings of American organizations, clubs or conferences	23	30.7	15	20.0	15	20.0	22	29.3

TABLE 6.6

SECONDARY CONTACT WITH AMERICANS: FREQUENCY (Fre.) AND PERCENTAGE (Pctg.) OF
SAUDI STUDENTS ON THE USE OF MASS-MEDIA SOURCES

	Never		Once a Week		2-3x/week		Every Day	
	Fre.	Pctg.	Fre.	Pctg.	Fre.	Pctg.	Fre.	Pctg.
Reading American publications	6	8.0	28	37.3	22	29.3	19	25.3
Watching television programs	1	1.3	4	5.3	11	14.7	59	78.7

TABLE 6.7
SECONDARY CONTACT WITH AMERICANS: FREQUENCY (Fre.) AND PERCENTAGE (Pctg.) OF
THE USE OF VARIOUS KINDS OF MASS-MEDIA CONTENT

	News		Entertain- ment		Sports		Educa- tionally Oriented		Socially, Culturally Oriented	
	Fre.	Pctg.	Fre.	Pctg.	Fre.	Pctg.	Fre.	Pctg.	Fre.	Pctg.
Used	61	81.3	47	62.7	28	37.3	40	53.3	35	46.7
Not used	14	18.7	28	37.3	47	62.7	35	46.7	40	53.3
TOTALS	75		75		75		75		75	

TABLE 6.8
FREQUENCY (Fre.) AND PERCENTAGE (Pctg.) OF RESPONSES
TO THE FREE TIME SPENT WITH AMERICANS VERSUS
OTHER GROUPS

With Group	Amount of Free Time Spent							
	Most of It		Half of It		Less Than Half of It		None of It	
	Fre.	Pctg.	Fre.	Pctg.	Fre.	Pctg.	Fre.	Pctg.
Saudis	32	42.7	25	33.3	17	22.7	1	1.3
Arabs	8	10.7	14	18.7	38	50.7	15	20.0
Foreigners	1	1.3	2	2.7	38	50.7	34	45.4
Americans	3	4.0	7	9.3	51	68.0	14	18.6

Arabian students engage in, and the tendency to gravitate toward contact with other Arabs, might be attributable to such factors as the following.

1. It is natural to seek out others from one's own country or culture when abroad -- people in one's own reference group or membership group.

2. Similarity of language may be important. As suggested by earlier research (Simard 1981:181), language is a very important component of ethnic identity.

3. Americans were characterized by the sample as being difficult to get along with. Similar findings were reported by Hull (1978:173) in his case study of Saudi Arabian students:

Americans were difficult to get to know.
 . . . American students were neither receptive to foreign students nor eager to talk with them. . . . Students from Arabic-speaking countries and from Black African countries were the most likely to have reported problems with a lack of contact with local people [Americans].

4. Finally, loneliness, homesickness, and difficulties in adjustment to the new environment might lead Saudi students to spend more of their time with fellow nationals or Arabs who share these feelings. Extensive contact of this type over time may reduce dissonance and contribute to stability of attitudes (congruency theory).

The number of variables possibly bearing on cross-cultural experiences is, of course, enormous. Some

background and situational variables were selected from earlier literature for their importance as potential determinants of social contact. The statistical analysis undertaken for the present study indicated the following significant relationships between contact and those variables or characteristics.

Background Characteristics

Age. Table 6.9 presents the data showing that young Saudi Arabian students tended to engage in more contact with Americans than did their older counterparts. The strength of the relationship between contact and age is moderate ($\gamma = 0.33$), and it is significant at the 0.17 level.

Marital status. Table 6.9 also shows that single Saudi students tended to have more contact with Americans than did those who were married. The difference between these two groups is highly significant at the 0.02 level, and the relationship is negative and very strong ($\gamma = -0.80$).

Academic status. As shown in Table 6.9, graduate students tended to engage in more contact with Americans than did undergraduate students. The differences between the two groups are significant at the 0.16 level; the strength of the relationship is moderate ($\gamma = -0.39$).

Compared to similar studies with foreign students, particularly Saudi Arabians (e.g., Al-Obeidy 1973), the

TABLE 6.9
CONTACT WITH AMERICANS AND PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS

Categories	Contact			No. of Cases	Statistical Test
	Low	Medium	High		
<u>Age Category</u>					
20-30	37.0	34.8	28.3	46	Chi-square=3.482 df=2 sig.=0.17 gamma=0.33
30-40	17.2	41.4	41.4	29	
TOTALS	22	28	25	75	
<u>Sex category</u>					
Male	21.1	39.7	36.2	58	Chi-square=3.357 df=2 sig.=0.19 gamma=0.35
Female	47.1	29.4	23.5	17	
TOTALS	22	28	25	75	
<u>Marital status category</u>					
Single	0.0	25.0	75.0	8	Chi-square=7.905 df=2 sig.=0.02 gamma= -0.80
Married	33.0	38.5	27.7	65	
TOTALS	22	27	24	73	
<u>Academic status category</u>					
Graduate	24.6	39.3	36.1	61	Chi-square=3.592 df=2 sig.=0.16 gamma= -0.39
Under-graduate	50.0	28.6	21.4	14	
TOTALS	22	28	25	75	

results of the present study seem strange. Perhaps this anomaly results from the fact that the result of a chi-square test is partly a function of the sample size, and a high proportion of our undergraduate students (12 of the 14 undergraduates) were female. The reactions of Saudi Arabian women are different from men's reactions, since the position of each in Saudi society is markedly different from that in the United States. If the size of the undergraduate male student sample were larger, the result of the chi-square test might be significantly different.

To further explore the contact-academic status association, the association between contact and sex of student was examined. Thus, Table 6.9 shows that male students had more contact with Americans than did female students. The difference between the two groups is significant at the 0.18 level. The strength of the relationship is moderate ($\gamma = -0.35$).

Conditions of Stay in the United States

Ability to communicate in English. Table 6.10 shows that the higher the student's ability to communicate in English, the higher the level of contact he or she had. The difference between those with a higher level of English ability and those with a lower level is significant at the 0.27 level, but the relationship between English ability and contact is not strong ($\gamma = 0.19$).

Length of stay in the United States. As shown in

TABLE 6.10
CONTACT WITH AMERICANS AND
CONDITIONS OF THE STAY

Conditions	Contact			No. of cases	Statistical Test
	Low	Medium	High		
<u>English Ability</u>					
Low	47.4	21.1	31.6	19	Chi-square=5.202 df=4 sig.=0.27 gamma=0.19
Medium	23.3	46.7	30.0	30	
High	23.1	38.5	38.5	26	
TOTALS	22	28	25	75	
<u>Satisfaction with Academic Work</u>					
Very satisfied	11.1	44.4	44.4	18	Chi-square=2.343 df=6 sig.=0.29 gamma= -0.22334
Satisfied	35.4	37.5	27.1	48	
Somewhat dissatisfied	23.6	14.3	57.1	7	
Dissatisfied	50.0	50.0	0.0	2	
TOTALS	22	23	25	75	
<u>Length of Stay</u>					
< 1 year	25.0	58.3	16.7	12	Chi-square=5.663 df=6 sig.=0.46 gamma=0.14
1-2 years	33.3	33.3	33.3	18	
3-4 years	37.0	25.9	37.0	27	
> 4 years	16.7	44.4	38.9	18	
TOTALS	22	28	25	75	

TABLE 6.10--continued

Conditions	Contact			No. of cases	Statistical Test
	Low	Medium	High		
<u>Accommodations</u>					
On-campus	36.4	39.4	24.2	33	Chi-square=2.520 df=2 sig.=0.28 gamma=0.29
Off-campus	23.8	35.7	40.5	42	
TOTALS	22	28	25	75	
<u>Pre-Arrival Impression of Americans</u>					
Very favorable	100.0	0.0	0.0	1	Chi-square=13.753 df=8 sig.=0.09 gamma=0.32
Favorable	83.3	0.0	16.7	6	
Somewhat favorable	26.6	40.7	29.6	27	
Unfavorable	17.2	44.8	37.9	29	
Very unfavorable	25.0	33.3	41.7	12	
TOTALS	22	28	25	75	
<u>Accuracy of Source</u>					
Very accurate	46.7	20.0	33.3	15	Chi-square=15.381 df=8 sig.=0.05 gamma=0.33
Accurate	32.5	40.0	27.5	40	
Somewhat inaccurate	13.3	53.3	33.3	15	
Very inaccurate	0.0	0.0	100.0	4	
TOTALS	22	28	25	75	

Table 6.10, students who had been in the United States longer tended to have more contact with Americans than did the relative newcomers. The difference between the two groups is statistically significant at the 0.46 level, but the relationship -- though in the predicted direction -- is fairly weak ($\gamma = 0.14$).

Accommodations. Students living off-campus tended to have more contact with Americans than did those who lived on-campus. Table 6.10 shows the difference between the two groups, which was found to be statistically significant at the 0.28 level. The relationship between accommodation and contact appears to be moderate ($\gamma = 0.29$).

Pre-arrival impression of Americans. As shown in Table 6.10, students who had come to the United States with very unfavorable impressions became more involved in contact with Americans than those who had not. The differences between the two groups were found to be statistically significant at the 0.09 level, though the association between pre-arrival impression and contact is moderate ($\gamma = 0.32$).

Surprisingly, the accuracy of sources of information prior to arrival was found to be correlated with the students' contact, at the 0.05 level of significance. The association between the two variables is moderate ($\gamma = 0.33$).

Saudi Arabian Students' Attitudes
Toward Americans

From a number of studies, it appears that certain views about Americans are held quite generally by people of many other countries. Nevertheless, in the present study, evaluations of Americans ranged from unfavorable to very favorable, with the overall mean of collective responses of students reflecting fairly moderate attitudes in the overall index of evaluation of Americans ($M = 63.98$, $SD = 7.87$).

Attitudes Toward Individual
Americans (ATIA)

During their sojourn in America, Saudi Arabian students engage in various social activities with Americans in everyday situations -- e.g., going shopping, renting homes, traveling, and so on. Through these interactions, the Saudi students might develop certain ideas about American individuals, or even deepen or clarify preconceived stereotypes.

Saudi Arabian students generally describe Americans as somewhat friendly, hard workers, fairly honest, and somewhat easy to get along with. A notable exception to this generally positive evaluation appeared when respondents were asked to select the most typical characteristics of Americans. Among a list of characteristics chosen by the majority, 72 percent said

Americans were slightly "materialistic" (Table 6.11).

Foreign students often report or add marginal comments to the effect that they find Americans superficial. It is difficult to know exactly what is meant by "superficial" or "materialistic." As Hull (1978:106) notes: "What is viewed as materialistic depends upon the individual in question and the cultural assumptions of the society from which the student comes."

TABLE 6.11
ATTITUDES TOWARD INDIVIDUAL AMERICANS (ATIA):
MEAN RESPONSES TO THE ITEMS
OF THE ATIA SCALE

Item Content ^a	Items'	
	Mean ^b	Standard Deviation
General friendliness	2.56	0.72
Working ability	3.24	0.59
Honesty	2.96	0.58
General ease to get along with	2.63	0.67
"Materialistic" (as the most typical characteristic)	2.32	0.61

Mean = 13.70
SD = 2.00
Mode = 12.00

Range = 10.00
No. of Cases = 75

^aSee Appendix I for complete statements of the items (questionnaire Part V).

^bThe higher the score, the more favorable the attitude.

For the purposes of the present study, it is proposed that the respondents meant by "materialistic" that material rather than spiritual interest governs the type of contact Americans usually have with others.

These views expressed by Saudi Arabian students toward Americans on the questionnaire are not new. Selltiz et al. (1963) noted that Americans are widely believed to be friendly, informal, practical, efficient, and materialistic. Morris (1960) reported similar findings, but Lysgaard (1955) found the typical American to be described in somewhat more favorable than unfavorable terms.

Attitudes Toward American Family Relations (ATFR)

To many foreign students, the differences between American family relations and family relations back home are striking. The great majority, as reflected by many studies, see both emotional ties and sense of obligation among family members as weaker in the United States than in their home countries (Selltiz et al. 1963; Morris 1960; Chang 1972). There is considerable agreement that in the United States the wishes of the individual take precedence over family obligations, while the reverse is true in the home country.

Among the Saudi Arabian students sampled in the present study, attitudes about relationships among American family members were fairly unfavorable. The picture drawn

from the responses is that the American family relations are generally not strong; emotional feelings and sense of obligation are seen as slight. A notable exception is that the level of mutual respect between wife and husband in decisions regarding everyday living was seen as somewhat high. Also, the students were struck by the high level of self-reliance that Americans instill in their children (Table 6.12). Sixty-five percent of the Saudi Arabian students said American families raise their children to be very independent.

The results are consistent with the characteristics of the culture from which the sample comes. Saudi Arabian society exhibits a family-oriented type of community life. Families are large, and they participate in relatively simple, closely interwoven in-group activities and relations. Families are strongly patriarchal, and the parents' roles call for a considerable degree of formal deference from other members of the family. Marriages are arranged by the parents.

The young remain closely tied to the parental families, and they tend to make their way in the world through family channels. The intensity of emotional ties and mutual support make the family setting well suited for establishing dependency, based on enduring personal obligations to elders. Modernization has not broken so much new ground in the social sphere as in the economic: Traditional factors such as kinship and religion remain

TABLE 6.12

ATTITUDES TOWARD AMERICAN FAMILY RELATIONS (ATFR):
MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS OF THE
ITEMS IN THE ATFR SCALE

Item Content ^a	Items'	
	Mean ^b	Standard Deviation
Family ties in general	2.93	0.90
Raising children	3.65	0.48
Children obey and respect parents' authority	2.37	0.84
Mutual respect between husbands and wives	3.41	0.82
Emotional feelings among persons and parents	2.64	0.93
Emotional feelings among brothers and sisters	2.52	0.92
Sense of obligation among persons and parents	2.43	0.33
Sense of obligation among members other than parents	2.21	0.86
Tolerance of young	2.49	0.98
Changing family relations to match Americans'	1.92	0.94
Mean = 26.28 Range = 24.00 SD = 4.75 No. of Cases = 75 Mode = 24.00		

^aSee Appendix I for complete statements (questionnaire Part VI)

^bThe higher the score, the more favorable the attitude.

very important in Saudi Arabian behavior, and have only been modified, not revolutionized, in recent years.

Family ties remain very strong in Saudi society. . . . They are undergoing some transformation . . . but the break is not acrimonious, by any means, and the son shows proper respect and love for his father by visiting him daily, if possible, and maintaining the strong personal bond that unites him with other members of their extended family. (Rugh 1973:17)

Among the students in the present study's sample, there was a strong correlation between disapproval of the characteristics of American family life and lack of desire to change their own cultural values governing family relations in the direction of American values (significant at the 0.004 level; $\gamma = 0.57$). For them, Saudi families provide a stable set of values in a rapidly changing world.

Attitudes Toward Student-Instructor Relations (ATSIR)

Academic relations, particularly with instructors, are crucial in the student's academic life. The student interacts with an educational community, is exposed to various patterns of relations, and becomes acquainted with general rules and regulations governing such relations.

As shown in Table 6.13, Saudi Arabian students have slightly favorable attitudes toward student-instructor relations at American schools. Such relations seem less formal to them than do analogous relations back home. The sample reported that there is mutual respect between

students and instructors; that instructors are somewhat tolerant of students disagreeing with them; that instructors are more interested in the student's achievements than are those in Saudi Arabia; and that it is fairly easy to get along with them.

TABLE 6.13

ATTITUDES TOWARD STUDENT-INSTRUCTOR RELATIONS (ATSIR):
MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS OF THE RESPONSES
TO THE ITEMS IN THE ATSIR SCALE

Item Content ^a	Mean ^b	Standard Deviation
Formality of relations	2.92	0.93
Respect by students of their instructors	3.17	0.84
Respect by instructors of their students	3.61	0.75
Tolerance of instructors in accepting disagreement	3.40	0.99
Instructors' interest in students' achievement	3.50	0.81
General ease in getting along with instructors	3.80	0.72
Changing Saudi educational policy to match American policy in this respect	3.59	1.85

Mean = 24.00
SD = 3.43
Mode = 26.00

Range = 14.00
No. of Cases = 75

^aSee Appendix I for complete statements (questionnaire, Part VII).

^bThe higher the score, the more favorable the attitude.

There is a general but slight tendency among the students to agree with American educational policies and to favor changing Saudi Arabian policies to resemble them. The association between the students' evaluations of student-instructor relations and favoring change in Saudi educational policies is highly significant at the 0.0004 level, and the association is very strong ($\gamma = 0.63$). In general, Saudi students indicated that they were pleased with academic relations at the U.S. institutions in which they were enrolled. The behavior of Saudi instructors challenges the positive self-image of students, and thus threatens them. American instructors are more supportive, more likely to look for positive rather than negative aspects of a student's work.

The educational socialization of Saudi Arabian students back home has taught them respect for authority. Authoritarianism exhibited by Saudi instructors is imitated by students. Thus, the acceptance of authoritarianism as a way of life may lead to behavior that superficially appears to be accepting and cooperative, but might actually be a camouflage for hostility. Saudi Arabians may find studying in America to be an opportunity for release from some of the practices inherited from their own culture and acceptance of other alternatives.

Summary

The attitudes of Saudi Arabian students toward the major social patterns in the United States -- particularly Americans as individuals, American family relations, and student-instructor relations in American schools -- were diverse. As expected, a great majority of Saudi students held slightly favorable attitudes toward student-instructor relationships. Although Saudi students seemed to hold moderate attitudes toward individual Americans, Americans were viewed in a somewhat favorable light. In contrast, the students held fairly unfavorable attitudes toward American family-relationship patterns. They believed that interrelations and sense of obligation among American family members are not strong.

The results coincide with those of previous research on foreign students in the United States (e.g., Selltitz et al. 1963; Coelho 1958; Morris 1960; Chang 1970; Bustamante 1978).

The striking differences between the students' attitudes toward American family relations and their views toward academic relations at American schools might be attributable to various factors:

1. Since family ties in Saudi Arabian society are very strong, Saudi students find family relationships at home give them security and support as they seek new opportunities. Bonds within American families appear too

weak to provide these benefits. So, the students could not easily detach themselves from their own traditional values governing family relations to the point that they would be able to evaluate Americans objectively.

2. The opportunities for the students to observe academic relations, especially student-instructor relations, were greater than the opportunities to observe the patterns of family relations. Such differences in opportunities might have an effect on the evaluation of each.

These assumptions will be examined in the following section.

Tests of the Hypotheses

Generally speaking, foreign students do not come to America with a blank mind, or perhaps even an open mind. They bring with them a set of perceptions, of expectations, built up through the years. Their preconceptions may be quite definite or unrealistic. It seems likely that the more realistic they are, the less likely they are to be changed by the students' experiences in the United States.

Almost all studies of foreign students in the United States point to the fact that the preconceptions with which the foreign students come, and the nature of their experiences in the host country, influence their attitudes toward the host country and its people, either positively or negatively.

Attitudinal differences, in the present study, are operationally defined as the degree of favorability toward Americans with respect to certain characteristics of their life. Three areas were discussed in the preceding section: Attitudes Toward Individual Americans (ATIA), Attitudes Toward American Family Relations (ATFR), and Attitudes Toward Student-Instructor Relations (ATSIR). In addition, a combination of the students' responses to all the attitude questions was used in a summary evaluation index.

The primary concern in the present study is to examine the attitudes of Saudi students toward Americans as related to the types of cross-cultural contact between the two groups. There were three hypotheses.

Attitude-Contact Hypothesis

The following hypothesis was proposed: The more Saudi Arabian students have contact with Americans, the more they tend to have favorable attitudes toward Americans.

The theoretical framework centered on the assumption that contact between members of different cultures results in more favorable attitudes. Most cross-cultural studies support this assumption (e.g., Williams et al. 1955; Pool 1965; Basu & Ames 1967; Ibrahim 1970; Chang 1972). There is, however, some disagreement concerning the hypothesis (e.g., Sherif 1956; Newcomb 1956; Amir 1969).

To test the hypothesis, the contact scale was used. Saudi Arabian students were classified into three groups

according to their contact with Americans. A chi-square test was produced, with "level of contact" as the row heading and "level of attitude" as the column heading, to examine the attitudinal differences among the three groups.

Examination of the overall attitude of Saudi Arabian students toward Americans (which is a combination of the three score areas of attitudes -- ATIA, ATFR, and ATSIR -- in one index, OAA) shows that high-contact students had more favorable attitudes, while low-contact students had less favorable attitudes. Table 6.14 indicates that, among the high-contact group, 60 percent were found to hold more favorable attitudes, whereas among the low-contact group, only 22.7 percent had the same amount of favorability. Although the association between contact and attitudes is

TABLE 6.14

CONTACT AND OVERALL ATTITUDES TOWARD AMERICANS (OAA)

Contact	Favorability of Attitude			No. of Cases
	Low	Medium	High	
Low	40.9	36.4	22.7	22
Medium	25.0	50.0	25.00	28
High	24.0	16.0	60.00	25
TOTALS	22	26	27	75

Chi-square = 11.37
gamma = 0.36

df = 4
sig. = 0.02

moderate ($\gamma = 0.36$), it is highly significant at the 0.02 level.

The attitude-contact hypothesis was further assessed by considering statements of Saudi Arabian students regarding their pre-arrival impressions about Americans in general (questionnaire Part II, item 15). The pre-arrival impression was a retrospective datum, and in the present study, the attitude was generally unfavorable.

Table 6.15 shows the relationship (not statistically significant) between contact and pre-arrival impression. Its significance reached only the 0.40 level. The association between the two variables is moderate ($\gamma = 0.31$).

TABLE 6.15
CONTACT AND PRE-ARRIVAL IMPRESSIONS

Pre-Arrival Impression	Level of Contact			No. of Cases
	Low	Medium	High	
Very favorable	100.0	0.0	0.0	1
Favorable	33.3	0.0	16.7	6
Somewhat favorable	29.6	40.7	29.6	27
Unfavorable	17.8	44.8	37.9	29
Very unfavorable	25.0	33.3	41.9	12
TOTALS	22	28	25	75

Chi-square = 13.75
 $\gamma = 0.31$

df = 8
sig. = 0.40

While Table 6.14 shows that there is a significant relationship between contact with Americans and the overall attitudes of Saudi Arabian students, and it is inferred that more contact with Americans leads to a more favorable attitude toward Americans, the significance of the relationship between contact and attitudes does not prove that contact leads to more favorable attitudes. However, the direction of the relationship can be checked by examining the patterns of relations in specific attitude areas.

For the area of Attitudes Toward Individual Americans (ATIA), Table 6.16 shows that a higher percentage of the high-contact group (64 percent) among Saudi students holds more favorable attitudes respecting this area than among the low-contact group (18.2 percent). The difference is significant at the 0.004 level, and the association is reasonably strong ($\gamma = 0.51$).

Although the differences among the high-interaction students and the low-interaction students are statistically nonsignificant, the findings give some evidence of a moderate-to-strong association between contact and attitudes toward American family relations (ATFR) ($\gamma = 0.43$). Table 6.17 shows that the differences among the three groups of students are significant at the 0.06 level.

In the area of Attitudes Toward Student-Instructor Relations (ATSIR), Table 6.18 shows a nonsignificant

relationship between contact and attitudes. Moreover, the strength of the relationship is rather low ($\gamma = 0.13$). The absence of a relationship between contact and ATSIR might reflect reality -- that this area of attitudes is accepted and clear-cut. That is, the nature of contact measured does not present an adequate index for that area. Undoubtedly, it provides little opportunity, if any, for attitudinal differences respecting this area.

The nonsignificant relationship between contact and Attitudes Toward American Family Relations (ATFR) might be attributable to the strong dominant influence of the students' family values toward rejection of the patterns of

TABLE 6.16

CONTACT AND ATTITUDES TOWARD INDIVIDUAL AMERICANS (ATIA)

Contact	Favorability of Attitudes			No. of Cases
	Low	Medium	High	
Low	59.1	22.7	18.2	22
Medium	17.9	21.4	60.7	28
High	16.0	20.0	64.0	25
TOTALS	22	16	37	75

Chi-square = 15.60
 $\gamma = 0.51$

df = 4
 sig. = 0.004

TABLE 6.17

CONTACT AND ATTITUDES TOWARD
AMERICAN FAMILY RELATIONS (ATFR)

Contact	Favorability of Attitudes			No. of Cases
	Low	Medium	High	
Low	40.9	45.5	13.6	22
Medium	21.4	46.4	32.1	28
High	16.0	32.0	52.0	25
TOTALS	19	31	25	75

chi-square = 9.113
gamma = 0.43

df = 4
sig. = 0.06

TABLE 6.18

CONTACT AND ATTITUDES TOWARD
STUDENT-INSTRUCTOR RELATIONS (ATSIR)

Contact	Favorability of Attitudes			No. of Cases
	Low	Medium	High	
Low	36.4	18.2	45.5	22
Medium	28.6	42.9	28.6	28
High	20.0	32.0	48.0	25
TOTALS	21	24	30	75

chi-square = 4.95
gamma = 0.13

df = 4
sig. = 0.29

family relations seen among American families. However, the general ATFR of Saudi Arabian students, as measured by the present study, was unfavorable in nature. This is consistent with several studies on foreign students, which have concluded that the family-relations aspect of American culture is most severely criticized by students from foreign countries (e.g., Morris 1960; Selltiz et al. 1963; Chang 1972; Bustamante 1978).

It is possible that the relationship between contact and ATFR and ATSIR was concealed by other variables -- a possibility which will be discussed after examining the relationship between these areas of attitudes and some background variables.

Obviously, the available data for the present study do not add up to conclusive findings. They do suggest, though, that intensive contact with Americans is related to more favorable attitudes. Thus, the data are consistent with the expectation that contact with Americans would influence attitudes toward certain aspects of American life more than attitudes toward other aspects. As Amir (1969:337-8) stated: "In many cases where the attitude change results from the contact situation, the change is limited to a certain specific aspect of the attitude, but is not generalized to other aspects."

Attitude-Length of Stay Hypothesis

Many studies on foreign students in the United States have assumed that attitude change lessens with duration of stay. One of the most striking assumptions relating to attitude change through time is the so-called U-curve proposition. (This was discussed in Chapter III.) For the present study, it was anticipated that Saudi Arabian students who have stayed longer in the U.S. tend to be more favorable in their attitudes toward Americans than do those who have stayed in the U.S. for shorter periods.

To test the hypothesis, the overall attitudes of Saudi Arabian students in the four stages of length of stay were compared by performing a chi-square test. As shown in Table 6.19, the attitudes of Saudi Arabian students were apparently different at different stages of the sojourn. The least favorable attitudes were prevalent during the first stage (16.7 percent), less than one year. The attitudes of students became increasingly favorable up to the end of the second year (44.4 percent). There was a drop in the favorability of attitudes during the third and fourth years (25.9 percent). Attitudes improved markedly after the fourth year (55.6 percent). The differences among the four stages were significant at the 0.09 level, though the association between length of stay and attitudes is extremely weak ($\gamma = 0.05$).

Since the chi-square test did not support the

hypothesis, an analysis of variance was performed to further assess the hypothesis. This was done for the overall attitudes of students in the fourth stage of stay in the United States. The attitudinal differences among Saudi students in the four stages were found to be nonsignificant. Thus, the findings lent no support to the attitudes-length of stay hypothesis (Table 6.20).

These results can be checked yet again by examining the patterns of change in specific attitude areas. For instance, Table 6.21 shows that the favorability of Attitudes Toward American Family Relations (ATFR) drops in the third stage. By the last part of the visit (over four years), the student has had the opportunity to see with more clarity and depth the positive and negative aspects of host-culture families, and as a consequence, attitudes become more favorable, though the differences are still not significant. The strength of association between length of stay and ATFR is virtually nil ($\gamma = 0.02$).

Attitudes Toward Student-Instructor Relations (ATSIR) (Table 6.21) show a decline in favorability during the first stage of the sojourn. Attitudes improved steadily up to the end of the second stage; then, in the third and fourth stages, they became less favorable again. The differences between the stages were significant at the 0.17 level, but the strength of association between length of stay and contact is nearly nil ($\gamma = -0.02$).

Attitudes Toward Individual Americans (ATIA) showed a

TABLE 6.19
LENGTH OF STAY AND OVERALL ATTITUDES (OAA)
OF SAUDI STUDENTS

Length of Stay	Fav'bility of Attitude			No. of Cases	Statistical Test
	Low	Medium	High		
< 1 year	25.0	58.3	16.7	12	chi-square=10.93 df=6 sig.=0.09 gamma=0.051
1-2 years	16.7	38.9	44.4	18	
3-4 years	37.0	37.0	25.9	27	
> 4 years	33.3	11.1	55.6	18	
TOTALS	22	26	27	75	

TABLE 6.20

ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE COMPARISON: OAA MEAN SCORE
IN REGARD TO LENGTH OF STAY

Length of Stay	Mean	Standard Deviation	No. of Cases		
< 1 year	62.75	5.28	12		
1-2 years	65.61	7.01	18		
3-4 years	62.26	8.49	27		
> 4 years	65.78	8.99	18		
TOTALS	63.987	7.878	75		
Source of Variation	Sum of Sq.	df	F	p	
Between	204.163	3	1.1009	0.355	
Within	4388.824	71			
TOTALS	4592.987	74			

Pearson's $r = 0.06$

TABLE 6.21
LENGTH OF STAY AND ATTITUDES

Length of Stay	Fav'bility of Attitude			No. of Cases	Statistical Test
	Low	Medium	High		
Attitude Toward American Family Relations (ATFR)					
< 1 year	25.0	50.0	25.0	12	chi-square=4.718 df=6 sig.=0.58 gamma=0.02
1-2 years	22.2	33.3	44.4	18	
3-4 years	25.9	51.9	22.2	27	
> 4 years	27.8	27.8	44.4	18	
TOTALS	19	31	25	75	
Attitude Toward Student-Instructor Relations (ATSIR)					
< 1 year	16.7	50.0	33.3	12	chi-square=9.017 df=6 sig.=0.17 gamma= -0.02
1-2 years	22.2	33.3	44.4	18	
3-4 years	44.4	14.8	40.7	27	
> 4 years	16.7	44.4	38.9	18	
TOTALS	21	24	30	75	
Attitude Toward Individual Americans (ATIA)					
< 1 year	25.0	41.7	33.3	12	chi-square=8.63 df=6 sig.=0.19 gamma=0.10
1-2 years	27.8	33.3	38.9	18	
3-4 years	25.9	14.8	59.3	27	
> 4 years	38.9	5.6	55.6	18	
TOTALS	22	16	37	75	

similar pattern. Table 6.21 shows that attitudes improved up to the end of the third stage (but not in the second), then in the fourth stage became less favorable. The differences among the four stages were significant at the 0.19 level, though the association between length of stay and ATIA is rather weak ($\gamma = 0.10$).

Students' length of stay seems to make some difference in how favorable their attitudes toward Americans are. The relationship between attitudes and length of stay is still statistically rather weak, but it is in the predicted direction in some cases, particularly with OAA and ATFR. As a whole, the findings lent no support to the hypothesis concerning an attitude-length of stay linkage.

Saudi Arabian students, during the first stages of the sojourn in America, seem to live with the surprises of being in a new world that the international media have projected as in the forefront of technology, human relations, etc. After the first period, the illusions and enchantment pass, and as the student becomes more involved with the culture, she or he realizes that the host country has both advantages and disadvantages. Family structures and human relations are the most crucial criteria for judging the hosts. Consequently, the students become critical of the host people.

The stay in America allows for the unfolding of several developmental stages in cultural learning. In addition to learning something of the host culture, the

student gains greater awareness of his or her own culture. Saudi Arabian students, becoming aware of values and standards implicit in their own culture, may find it difficult to detach from them -- particularly in the case of family relations.

In contact with the hosts, Saudi students may also become more attentive to aspects of the host culture that are of importance (as shown in Attitudes Toward Student-Instructor Relations). In areas where American practices differ markedly from Saudi practices (see ATFR), there is a negative attitude; in areas where the practices are closer (see ATIA), there are moderate attitudes.

The element of time operates as a conditioning variable. In assuming that the sojourn is "long enough to give . . . the opportunity to come to terms with the requirements of life in the host country (Siegel 1956:52), the phrase "long enough" is crucial for testing hypotheses about how far-reaching are the changes that can be expected. The significance of attitudes expressed might also have to be assessed in the light of commitment to native cultural patterns. This leads to consideration of the meaning of the hosts' experience within the goal system of the foreign individual and the society from which she or he comes. A comparison of the discrepancies between what is viewed as favorable and what is seen as less favorable in a variety of attitude areas implies a tendency of students who see some aspects of American culture as being similar

to their home culture to like those aspects, while tending to dislike those aspects viewed as different from their home cultural practices.

For instance, one of the strongest bulwarks of Saudi Arabian society has traditionally been its stable and intimate family organization. As our study reflected, Saudi students, making comparisons with the very close family ties that are typical in their society, tended to see American family ties as very weak. However, at the same time, they were struck by the way Americans raise their children. Moreover, they were in favor of the student-instructor relations found in American schools.

On personal characteristics, where the position of Americans is clear and extreme, most Saudi students described Americans as hard workers, honest, difficult to get along with, and materialistic. Such evaluations seem to spring from cultural differences in standards, experiences, and values in Saudi Arabian society, and are related to the social and psychological atmosphere in the home country.

The general problem is, of course, that of the relation between personality and culture; more specifically, that of the way in which particular attributes, or manifestations of personality, are related to particular structures and process of the cultural environment. (Macleod 1959:73)

It is quite clear that there is a difference between an environment in which the child is encouraged to make his or her own decisions and an environment in which what is

good or bad for the child is decided for the child. American and Saudi Arabian families show striking differences in parental roles and parent-child relations. No doubt, such differences may contribute to attitude formation. Still, it is an oversimplification to expect that contact for a period of stay in the host country will uniformly result in more favorable attitudes toward its people.

Attitude-Background Characteristics Hypothesis

Several studies have suggested that foreign students' reactions to their hosts are likely to be influenced by a composite of the students' personal background characteristics. Thus, a set of hypotheses was developed for the present study connecting attitudes to selected characteristics of the sample of Saudi Arabian students at Michigan State University. They will be explored here.

Attitude-Age of Student Hypothesis

H_{3a}: Young Saudi Arabian students have more favorable attitudes toward Americans than do older Saudi students.

Table 6.22 shows the percentage distribution of Saudi Arabian students by age on the Overall Attitude Toward Americans (OAA) scale. The students' age seems to have made some difference in how favorable were their attitudes toward Americans: The younger students tended to hold more favorable attitudes than did their older

TABLE 6.22
ATTITUDES AND BACKGROUND CHARACTERISTICS

Age Category	Fav'bility of Attitude			No. of Cases	Statistical Test
	Low	Medium	High		
Overall Attitude (OAA) and Age					
20-30	21.7	41.3	37.0	46	chi-square=3.88 df=2 sig.=0.14 gamma= -0.20
30-40	41.4	24.1	34.5	29	
TOTALS	22	26	27	75	
Attitudes Toward Individual Americans (ATIA) and Age					
20-30	28.3	19.6	52.2	46	chi-square=0.415 df=2 sig.=0.81 gamma= -0.10
30-40	31.0	24.1	44.8	29	
TOTALS	22	16	37	75	
Attitudes Toward Family Relations (ATFR) and Age					
20-30	23.9	45.7	30.4	46	chi-square=0.931 df=2 sig.=0.63 gamma=0.05
30-40	27.6	34.5	37.9	29	
TOTALS	19	31	25	75	
Attitudes Toward Student-Instructor Relations (ATSIR) and Age					
20-30	23.9	21.7	54.3	46	chi-square=10.75 df=2 sig.=0.005 gamma= -0.46
30-40	34.5	48.3	17.2	29	
TOTALS	21	24	30	75	

counterparts (37 percent of the students under 30 had more favorable attitudes, compared to 34.5 percent in the 30-40 age group). The difference between the two groups was statistically significant at the 0.14 level (would occur 14 percent of the time by chance alone); the association between age and favorability was not strong, but it was in the predicted direction ($\gamma = -0.20$).

When each specific area of attitudes was broken down by the variable age, the results indicated that favorability in the area of Student-Instructor Relations was strongly related to the age of students. Table 6.22 shows that among the young age group (under 30), 54.3 percent scored high, compared to 17.2 percent among the 30-40 age group. The differences between the two groups were highly significant at the 0.005 level. The association between the two variables was relatively strong ($\gamma = -0.46$).

The relationships between age and favorability in terms of Attitude Toward Individual Americans and Attitude Toward American Family Relations were not significant.

Although the relationship between age and attitudes toward Americans is in the predicted direction (the younger the student, the more favorable her or his attitudes), it was not significant, with the exception of Attitude Toward Student-Instructor Relations (ATSIR), significant at the 0.005 level. The greater incidence of strong attitudes toward student-instructor relations among the 20-30 age

group may be explained in terms of increasing awareness among the younger generation about the importance of mutual respect in the academic relationship.

Attitude-Marital Status Hypothesis

H_{3b}: Unmarried Saudi Arabian students have more favorable attitudes toward Americans than do married Saudi students.

The data show almost no significant difference in the overall attitudes toward Americans of married versus unmarried Saudi students. The attitude of unmarried students toward Americans was more favorable but the difference was not significant. The association between marital status and attitudes was negative and moderate ($\gamma = -0.21$).

When each specific area of attitudes was broken down by the marital-status variable (Table 6.23), the association seemed slightly different. Marriage seemed to make a difference with respect to Attitude Toward Individual Americans (ATIA). Unmarried students were more likely to have more favorable attitudes toward individual Americans than were married students. The differences among the two groups were significant at the 0.05 level. The association between the two variables -- marital status and ATIA -- was moderate ($\gamma = -0.29$).

The differences between attitudes of married and unmarried students were not significant for the other

TABLE 6.23
ATTITUDES AND MARITAL STATUS

Marital Status	Fav'bility of Attitude			No. of Cases	Statistical Test
	Low	Medium	High		
Overall Attitudes (OAA) and Marital Status					
Single	25.0	25.0	50.0	8	chi-square=0.850 df=2 sig.=0.65 gamma= -0.21
Married	29.2	36.9	33.8	65	
TOTALS	21	26	26	73	
Attitudes Toward Individual Americans (ATIA) and Marital Status					
Single	0.0	50.0	50.0	8	chi-square=5.95 df=2 sig.=0.05 gamma= -0.29
Married	33.8	18.5	47.7	65	
TOTALS	22	16	35	73	
Attitudes Toward American Family Relations (ATFR) and Marital Status					
Single	25.0	12.5	62.5	8	chi-square=4.30 df=2 sig.=0.12 gamma= -0.36
Married	24.6	46.2	29.2	65	
TOTALS	18	31	24	73	
Attitudes Toward Student-Instructor Relations (ATSIR) and Marital Status					
Single	25.0	25.0	50.0	8	chi-square=0.43 df=2 sig.=0.80 gamma= -0.15
Married	27.7	33.8	38.5	65	
TOTALS	20	24	29	73	

relationships reported -- Attitudes Toward Family Relations and Attitudes Toward Student-Instructor Relations.

Attitude-Academic Status Hypothesis

H_{3c}: Undergraduate Saudi Arabian students have more favorable attitudes toward Americans than do graduate Saudi students.

Contrary to expectations, graduate students in the sample held more positive attitudes toward Americans than did undergraduates in all of the relationships reported; however, none of the differences between these two groups was significant. (See Table 6.24.) Thus, the findings yield no support for the hypothesis.

The weak association between attitudes and academic status, and its direction (the reverse of that predicted), might be explained in terms of the limited size and representativeness of the sample. There were only 14 undergraduate students in the sample, and 12 of them were female.

Attitude-Ability to Communicate in English Hypothesis

H_{3d}: Saudi Arabian students with better ability to communicate in English tend to interact more with Americans and in turn tend to have more favorable attitudes toward Americans, than do those with poorer ability to communicate in English.

This hypothesis is by no means a basic one. It is derived from the one postulating a positive relationship

TABLE 6.24

ATTITUDES AND ACADEMIC STATUS

Academic Status				No. of Cases	Statistical Test
Overall Attitude toward Americans (OAA) and Academic Status					
Graduate	29.5	29.5	41.0	61	chi-square=4.766 df=2 sig.=0.09 gamma = -0.27
Undergraduate	28.6	57.1	14.3	14	
TOTALS	22	26	27	75	
Attitudes Toward Individual Americans (ATIA) and Academic Status					
Graduate	26.2	23.0	50.8	61	chi-square=1.620 df=2 sig.=0.44 gamma = -0.22
Undergraduate	42.9	14.3	42.9	14	
TOTALS	22	16	37	75	
Attitudes Toward American Family Relations (ATFR) and Academic Status					
Graduate	23.0	44.0	36.1	61	chi-square=1.473 df=2 sig.=0.48 gamma = -0.29
Undergraduate	35.7	42.9	21.4	14	
TOTALS	19	31	25	75	
Attitudes Toward Student-Instructor Relations (ATSIR) and Academic Status					
Graduate	24.6	32.8	42.6	61	chi-square=1.982 df=2 sig.=0.37 gamma = -0.31
Undergraduate	42.9	28.6	28.6	14	
TOTALS	21	24	30	75	

between contact and ability to communicate in the English language. The initial reasoning was as follows: A good command of English is associated with more contact with Americans. If the Saudi Arabian students with better ability to communicate in English interact more with Americans, it should follow that they will hold more favorable attitudes toward Americans.

Table 6.25 shows that there was a positive relationship between ability to communicate in English and contact, at the 0.26 level of significance. The relationship was not strong ($\gamma = 0.19$).

If there is no significant relationship between contact and language ability, and yet the two variables are positively related to the students' attitudes toward Americans, then it is reasonable to conclude that each variable independently influences attitudes toward Americans. This is in fact the case. The association between Overall Attitude toward Americans (OAA) and English ability was very significant at the 0.01 level (Table 6.25), whereas the relationship between contact and OAA was significant at the 0.02 level. The strength of association between English ability and OAA was rather low ($\gamma = 0.079$); the strength of association between contact with Americans and OAA was moderate ($\gamma = 0.36$).

Specifically, the relationship between English ability and Attitudes Toward Individual Americans (ATIA) was very significant, at the 0.002 level, with a γ of 0.050. The

TABLE 6.25

ATTITUDES AND ABILITY TO COMMUNICATE IN ENGLISH

English Ability	Fav'bility of Attitude			No. of Cases	Statistical Test
	Low	Medium	High		
Overall Attitudes toward Americans (OAA) and English Ability					
Low	36.8	36.8	26.3	19	chi-square=12.874 df=4 sig.=0.01 gamma=0.08
Medium	13.3	53.3	33.3	30	
High	42.3	11.5	46.3	26	
TOTALS	22	26	27	75	
Attitudes Toward Individual Americans (ATIA) and English Ability					
Low	21.1	52.6	26.3	19	chi-square=16.190 df=4 sig.=0.002 gamma=0.05
Medium	26.7	10.0	63.3	30	
High	38.5	11.5	50.0	26	
TOTALS	22	16	37	75	
Attitudes Toward American Family Relations (ATFR) and English Ability					
Low	26.3	52.6	21.1	19	chi-square=2.149 df=4 sig.=0.70 gamma=0.07
Medium	23.3	36.7	40.0	30	
High	26.9	38.5	34.6	26	
TOTALS	19	31	25	75	
Attitudes Toward Student-Instructor Relations (ATSIR) and English Ability					
Low	36.8	26.3	36.8	19	chi-square=1.841 df=4 sig.=0.76 gamma=0.02
Medium	20.0	36.7	43.3	30	
High	30.8	30.8	38.5	26	
TOTALS	21	24	30	75	

relationship between contact and ATIA was significant at the 0.004 level. The relationship between contact and ATFR was marginally significant, at the 0.06 level, while the relationship between English ability and ATFR was significant at the 0.70 level. (See Tables 6.25, 6.16, and 6.17.)

Neither the relationship between English ability (EA) and Attitudes Toward Student-Instructor Relations (ATSIR) nor the relationship between Contact With Americans (CWA) and ATSIR was significant. (See Tables 6.25 and 6.18).

Satisfaction with academic work was found to be strongly related to ATSIR at the 0.03 level, which implies greater satisfaction with student-instructor relations in America, compared to what is practiced in Saudi Arabia.

Ability in English was strongly related to Overall Attitude Toward Americans (OAA) (significance = 0.01, gamma = 0.08) and Attitude Toward Individual Americans (significance = 0.002, gamma = 0.05). Neither Attitude Toward American Family Relations nor ATSIR was related to English ability. These two sets of attitudes concern relationships of deep significance to the students, and apparently, much information concerning them can be obtained with even limited English ability.

The limited impact of English ability and contact on attitudes (overall, and specific areas) indicates that there is overlap between contact and ability to communicate in English in influencing students' attitudes toward

Americans. Thus, one can conclude that students with a good command of English have more favorable overall attitudes toward Americans (significant at the 0.02 level); however, the relationship between English ability and attitudes was not significant for individual areas of attitudes, with the notable exception of Attitudes Toward Individual Americans, significant at the 0.002 level.

This might be a reflection of everyday experience. Saudi Arabian students face problems with English at one time or another; considerateness in helping with such problems, on the part of Americans, may contribute to greater favorability in Saudis' attitudes respecting American individuals and to greater overall favorability.

Summary

The data collected for the present study were examined to test a number of hypotheses pertaining to the Saudi Arabian student's experience in the United States, as discussed in the preceding pages. Results of chi-square and gamma tests of independence and strength of association between variables led to the following conclusions.

Attitude-Contact Hypothesis

The data did not add up to a conclusive finding, but did suggest that intensive contact with Americans is related to favorability. The significant relationships were (a) between contact and overall attitudes and (b) between contact and attitudes toward individual Americans.

Attitude-Length of Stay Hypothesis

Although there is indication of association between length of stay and all areas of attitudes, the relationships were not statistically significant.

Attitude-Background Characteristics Hypothesis

In general, the relationships between attitudes in all areas and background characteristics were not significant. There is, however, an indication of association between some of the background characteristics and some areas of attitudes: The relationship between age and Attitudes Toward Student-Instructor Relations was significant, as were the relationships between English ability and overall attitudes; between English ability and attitudes toward individual Americans; and between marital status and attitudes toward individual Americans.

The present study revealed no statistically significant relationships between attitudes toward Americans (all areas) and other background characteristics, such as sex, academic status, socioeconomic status, or rural versus urban background. Only satisfaction with academic work was found to be statistically significant at the 0.03 level in relation to Attitudes Toward Student-Instructor Relations.

Summary and Conclusions

The purpose of the present study was to obtain information describing the attitudes toward Americans held by Saudi Arabian students at Michigan State University,

East Lansing, Mich., as related to the types of cross-cultural contact they have had with Americans. The study was not intended to be a comprehensive description of this group of foreign students, nor of all aspects of their experiences, nor of all possible outcomes of such experiences. Rather, it is exploratory in nature.

The study was designed to accomplish the following objectives:

1. To ascertain the relationship between Saudi Arabian students' social contact with Americans and the Saudi students' attitudes toward Americans, as well as between length of stay in the United States and attitudes toward Americans.

2. To explain the relationship of these attitudes to a number of background characteristics.

A number of hypotheses have been developed from studies of international educational exchange conducted over the past generation, and the present study tested some of these hypotheses for Saudi Arabian students at Michigan State University to gain further understanding of these students' attitudes toward the host people. (Saudi Arabians are relatively homogeneous in their national background, which is socioculturally unique; they are proud of it and are strongly committed to it.)

The subject population was all students from Saudi Arabia at Michigan State University. A complete listing of the 100 students from Saudi Arabia who were attending MSU

during fall term 1983 was furnished by the Saudi Arabian Educational Mission, Houston, Texas.

The data were collected via mailed questionnaires. Seventy-five students completed and returned the questionnaires by January 1984, the preestablished cutoff date for accepting returned questionnaires. The results of the study were based on the responses of these 75 students, who represented 75 percent of the total population.

Regarding the research questions for the present study, the findings revealed that the attitudes of Saudi Arabian students toward Americans were diverse. In general, they seemed to hold moderately favorable attitudes toward Americans as individuals, fairly unfavorable attitudes toward American family relations, and highly favorable attitudes toward student-instructor relations at American schools.

The Saudi Arabian students' general level of contact with Americans seemed to be relatively low. Significant relationships were found between contact with Americans and differences in attitudes toward Americans in some areas of attitudes (OAA and ATIA) but not others (ATFR and ATSIR).

Some relationship was found between background characteristics of students and differences in attitudes among students toward Americans, but the evidence was not entirely consistent for all characteristics, and the nature of the relationship was not clear for all areas of attitudes. The period of time spent in the United States

seemed to make some difference in attitudes, with a curvilinear shape, but the difference was not statistically significant.

Assessment of the Findings

At the outset, the researcher wishes to emphasize that the findings of the present study were relatively complicated, and their interpretation is open to considerable conjecture. Alternative explanations of findings were given whenever possible, whether the findings were in the predicted direction or not. This study did not attempt to establish a causal linkage between the variables; the design of the study made it inappropriate to assign causal linkages. Rather, the study was in large measure exploratory.

This section presents a summary assessment of the findings, their theoretical and practical implications, and their contribution toward social-psychological understanding of cross-cultural contact and attitudinal outcomes.

Attitude and Contact

Saudi Arabian students, as compared with students of other nationalities, generally seem to be near one end of a continuum of behavior and experience for foreign students. The Saudi end of the continuum is characterized by a practical, emotionally uninvolved approach to the new environment (low contact) and by highly similar views of

the Americans.

Nevertheless, as anticipated, differences did occur as the degree of contact with Americans increased. The findings of the present study partially support the assumption that contact is a necessary precondition to favorable general attitude toward hosts (in this case, Americans), especially if one considers the statements of students in the present study that they arrived with generally unfavorable attitudes toward Americans. Differences were most pronounced in the areas of Attitudes Toward Individual Americans and Overall Attitudes toward Americans. The data revealed a tendency for those who have relatively intensive contact with Americans to hold more favorable attitudes toward them.

Least subject to attitudinal differences among the sample were Attitudes Toward Family Relations and Attitudes Toward Student-Instructor Relations. No significant association was found between contact and these areas of attitudes. However, the extent of cultural differences between the home and host countries, and the quality and results of the contact experienced, are important in affecting attitudinal outcome (Shaffer & Dowling 1966). Thus, based on the findings, one may conservatively conclude that under certain conditions, with relatively intensive contact with Americans, students developed more favorable attitudes toward Americans in respect to certain aspects of the Americans' lives.

Attitudes and Length of Stay

No significant relationship was found between length of stay and attitudes towards Americans in any of the areas of attitudes measured, though there is a tendency of those students who have been in the U.S. for a longer time to hold more favorable attitudes, especially in the area of overall attitudes. One might suggest that the length of stay, if sufficient, might exert an influence upon attitudinal outcomes. Thus, if a student lives in a new and different culture for a period of time, she or he may be motivated to reevaluate host and home cultures. At the same time, home-country practices may provide a basis for the evaluation of the desirability of host-country practices. In fact, subjects in the present study -- being students away from home for a limited amount of time and therefore remaining attached closely to the home country -- might well perceive the practices and values of the hosts in the light of her or his past experience and from the perspective of her or his home-country reference group.

Thus, one might argue that change in attitudes may become more likely if the period of time of the sojourn is enough to allow such change. But there is also the possibility that commitment to home cultural values might continue to contribute to difficulty in making any such change occur. In any case, an appropriate definition of the period of time required for attitude change, considering

the influence of other variables (particularly cultural commitment), is needed.

Attitudes and Background Characteristics

As to the relationship between selected background variables and attitudes, a direct relationship was found between age of student and Attitudes Towards Student-Instructor Relations. Surprisingly, young students were more favorable than were older students. Further, there was highly significant relationship between ability to communicate in English and both Overall Attitudes toward Americans and Attitudes Toward Individual Americans. There was also a significant relationship between student marital status and Attitudes Toward Individual Americans. These relationships might be taken as indicators of contact facility provided by these variables, which thereby affect attitudinal outcome. No other background characteristics yield significant results.

Finally, it would appear that favorable effects may lead to advocacy or adoption of selected American values and practices. For example, there was a significant association between attitude toward the patterns of academic relations between students and instructors in American schools and the degree of agreement that such relationships should be adapted to the home country. Unfavorable effects, conversely, may lead to the rejection of the host culture's practices. Hence, there was significant association between Attitudes Toward American

Family Relations and the degree of disagreement with changing the patterns of family relations at home to make them more similar to those of Americans. An effort was made to give an explanation for these findings, whenever possible, in terms of present experiences in America as compared to past experiences with families, religion, and education in Saudi Arabia.

In this respect, Sewell and Davidson (1956) described the case of Scandinavian students as a willingness to adopt and transfer those select aspects of American life which were found desirable and which were thought to fit one's cultural background. Basu and Ames (1967), in their study of Indian students in Los Angeles, comment:

In fact, almost all the students interviewed found at least one part of American culture "unacceptable" to them. Seventy-two percent of the students responded that they were not sure they wanted to take any American values back home with them. (Basu & Ames 1967:14)

As for the possibility that differences in characteristics other than past and present experiences with the home and American cultures, in addition to the presence of willingness to distinguish among accessible alternatives in the new environment, account for the differences in views among Saudi Arabian students, we must recognize that personal characteristics and conditions of stay do not fully explain attitudinal differences. It may well be that Saudi Arabian students, throughout their stay in America, continue to perceive and evaluate their

experiences and the American people from the point of view of the Saudi people and culture. That is, they continue to use the Saudi people as their reference group for evaluating their American experiences.

Selltiz et al. (1963:293) stated:

A hypothesis specific to differences between students from different countries in their belief about or perception of the host country is drawn from the well-established psychological principle that judgments of an object are made in relation to the person's past experience with the objects of that type.

This hypothesis suggests that contrast between situations in the host country and those to which students have been accustomed at home will lead to differences in perception of the hosts' practices.

Accordingly, the Saudi Arabian students surveyed for the present study generally held moderately favorable attitudes toward Americans as individuals; unfavorable attitudes toward American family relations; and favorable attitudes toward student-instructor relations at American schools. That variations in favorability between the areas of attitudes are according to the students' evaluations of Americans' values and practices from the point of view of the students' past experience and cultural background was clearly demonstrated by the attitudes toward family relations, where patterns of relations in the two societies are considered to be quite different.

Studies on the attitudes of Saudi Arabian students

toward their traditional family relations and religious values revealed that neither contact nor length of stay has an effect on their attitudes, a pattern which implies the impact on attitudinal outcome of a strong commitment to cultural background (Al-Banyan 1974:95; Kershaw 1973:172-3).

Where the past experience of the students concerning the attitude object was undesirable, as in the case of the traditional, teacher-oriented relations at schools in Saudi Arabia, the experience in America with new patterns of relations was perceived more favorably, due to the contrast effect of the past experience. Furthermore, there was a significant relationship between the favorably viewed student-instructor relations and satisfaction about academic work, which implies increasing desirability of this type of new experience as a result of the student's exposure to it. Similarly, other studies on Middle Eastern students in general, and Saudi Arabian students in particular, reflect Middle Easterners' favorable attitudes toward student-instructor relations in the U.S. (Al-Hinai 1977:93; Jammaz 1972:60).

Because of the homogeneity of the sample in terms of strongly adhered-to cultural values and practices, differences that arise because of variables studied (background characteristics, contact, length of stay, etc.) should be relatively easy to detect in the reports of our respondents.

Theoretical and Practical
Implications of
the Findings

Theoretical Implications

The major concern of the present study, from a theoretical point of view, is to seek to define more adequately the extent to which out-group contact is an independent variable determining the direction of attitudes. Knowledge thus gained should contribute toward social-psychological understanding of cross-cultural contact and attitude formation.

The present study involved identifying the major variables explicit in the concept of attitude formation and change (e.g., contact, length of stay in the host country), as well as specifying their relation to the outcome of attitude formation or change by determining whether contact for a period of time serves to increase or to reduce the degree of favorability in attitudes toward the host country people. A series of background variables also were explored to measure their impact upon the attitudinal outcome.

The general hypotheses developed in the present study were that contact with foreign people and longer stay in the host country are related to more favorable attitudes toward the host people. Length of stay and amount of contact with Americans were expected to be of particular importance in influencing Saudi Arabian students' attitudes toward Americans. Such contact was expected to give the

out-group member (the Saudi Arabian) an opportunity to see and evaluate the life of the hosts, and thus is held to enable him or her to appreciate, understand, and perhaps even adopt the latter's way of life. This assumption could be generalized to any situation where cross-cultural contact occurs.

The findings of the present study were generally inconsistent with the general hypotheses. With respect to the specific hypotheses, however, the findings suggested that:

1. Contact with Americans had an impact on Saudi Arabian students' attitudes toward Americans, as indicated by increasing favorability in overall attitudes toward Americans and in attitudes toward individual Americans, but such impact cannot be generalized to all aspects of American life. In other words, while the findings were not conclusive, they did suggest that intensive contact with Americans is related to more favorable attitudes under certain conditions. The present study's findings are consistent with previous findings, particularly those of Newcomb (1950), Sherif & Sherif (1956), Selltiz et al. (1963), Mishler (1965), and Amir (1969). All of these studies suggest that for favorability to develop, certain conditions are required -- among them, cultural similarity.

2. Length of stay had the least influence on Saudi Arabian students' attitudes toward Americans. The expected differences in attitudes between those students who scored

high and those who scored low on the measurements related to the length of stay were not found to be significant.

3. Background characteristics in general were not related to attitude differences among Saudi Arabian students. Differences among students in respect to characteristics such as sex, academic status, rural-urban background, socioeconomic status, and accommodations were not statistically related to attitudes. The association of student age with Attitudes Toward Student-Instructor Relations was significant, however, as was the association between marital status and Attitudes Toward Americans. Self-perception as competent to communicate in English was significantly associated with both Attitudes Toward Individual Americans and Overall Attitudes toward Americans. Increases in these variables tended to lessen the tension in social interaction and thus to increase the probability of rewarding social interactions.

There are two general directions in which we may seek possible interpretations of the failure to find certain relationships. One involves the assumption that the data are valid and reliable -- that the variables and background characteristics were measured with reasonable accuracy. On the basis of this assumption, we would conclude that length of stay and background characteristics yield no significant influence on differences in attitudes of foreign students toward the host country. Thus, it remains possible that other factors may be of overriding importance -- that the

differences between students in attitude are based on cultural difference, rather than on the period of contact with the host people and other background characteristics.

The other possible explanation, of course, is along the line of questioning the adequacy of the data. Perhaps there really is a relationship between length of stay and attitude differences, and between attitudes and background characteristics, which the measures used in the present study have not reflected.

Saudi Arabian students in the United States usually lived in enclaves. Thus, they supported one another in interpreting American experiences in terms of the most important and rewarding values of their home culture -- their home reference group. This was particularly true with respect to family values and religious values. Higher education provided an example of a social system they respected and valued highly, but which was often less rewarding than desired. Many did find that the less formal structure of American universities enabled them to explore ideas more fully, to support theories contrary to those of their instructors, and thus to develop habits of creative scientific exploration they had not experienced as often at home.

American churches and American families do not offer models that Saudi Arabian students feel would strengthen their home society. The more open student-instructor relations of American universities do provide a model that

many Saudis believe should be explored within their home country.

One conclusion can be made. Although the analysis was far from complete, the implication seems to be that concentration on foreign students who tend to have relatively low contact with Americans (in the absence of natural stimulation for such contact -- particularly cultural similarity) would provide the maximum opportunity for producing differences in extent of contact by manipulation of background variables, and thus maximum opportunity for checking the resultant effects on attitudes. A study of the experience of foreign students in contact with American values could be structured in such a way that the research would focus on what values from the foreign culture become most important to the students in the light of their American experiences.

The changes in patterns of attitudes resulting from the American experience might also provide a means of studying the depth of commitment to the students' home culture. While the importance of personal characteristics and environmental conditions cannot be bypassed, it is felt that experiences and culture of origin constitute phenomena distinct enough to be studied independent from other factors in future research.

It is worthwhile to speculate about why a factor of such obvious and acknowledged importance has been neglected in almost all studies dealing with the attitudes and

adjustment of foreign students as a result of experience of living and studying in foreign countries. Some of the studies offer some hint of such research. In Morris's (1960) study of Indian students, for example, emphasis was on factors that lead to change in attitudes and values.

Researchers are not interested in focusing on the qualities of any particular culture, but rather on those processes of change which lead individuals from differing cultures to interact with mutual tolerance. Chang (1972:66) asserts that "the combination of the unique sociocultural background and life experience may produce a special kind of attitudes among Chinese students towards the U.S." However, he fails to analyze what this unique sociocultural background might be, beyond noting vaguely that "Chinese [people] are conservative in their outlook" (Chang 1972:67). The "national-status hypothesis" which he considers has nothing to do with the nation's culture -- only with the status which that nation is perceived to have in American eyes. Basu and Ames's (1967) study of cross-cultural contact and attitude formation among Indian students also did not indicate what influence Indian culture might have on the processes studied.

Another factor to consider might be the existence of a characteristic personality structure typical of foreign culture. Several studies argue that personality structure acts as an independent variable in influencing cultural change (see reference to authoritarianism, Basu & Ames

1967:12). Also, Basu and Ames (1967:6) argue that "people with high self-esteem do not change their attitude readily."

Would this be a personality characteristic of certain students differentiating them from others? Ibrahim (1970:32-3), for example, states that "the data indicates that the student's nationality does make a difference in the relative degrees of interaction with Americans." He adds that nationality does not affect attitudes, however (p. 36). He fails to consider the factor of differing cultural background in the participants (Arab students). Again, Selltiz et al. (1963:253) assert that "most important among the characteristics he [the foreign student] brings with him are his nationality and his previous foreign experience." Although the authors make some attempt to analyze the factor of "previous foreign experience" (Selltiz et al. 1963:339, Table 46), they make no attempt to analyze the factor of nationality.

It would appear that one exception to this characterization of studies on foreign students in the U.S. is Kershaw (1973), who studied the attitudes toward religion of Saudi Arabian students in the United States. Kershaw considered religion to be a dominant factor in Saudi Arabian culture, playing a crucial role in determining the attitudes of Saudi students as they were introduced to the foreign culture.

Practical Implications

One practical value of the present study is that it provides information that can be useful in improving international educational exchange and the policies upon which it is based. The findings may also lead to a better understanding, on the part of both the Saudi Arabian government and American institutions, of the attitudes, needs, and problems of Saudi Arabian students.

Some observed trends in attitudes toward host-country practices may provide a basis for evaluating the desirability of the host-country practices and the value of continuing to send students abroad. For example, there was distinct favorability toward the American style of relationship between student and instructor. This finding may point to reevaluation of the traditional instructor-oriented relations practiced in Saudi Arabian schools. The findings may also indicate that the group of students represented by the sample might play the roles of culture carrier and change agent in the home country.

In the area of attitudes toward American family relations, the study provides no evidence to concern Saudi Arabian policy-makers, families, or individuals about such students losing touch with their own culture in a way which might lead to conflict with traditional family patterns. On the contrary, the students viewed American family relationship patterns as less strong and less favorable than those at home.

Saudi Arabian students seem to be characterized by willingness to distinguish among the different aspects of American culture and to select among them the desirable ones. The consequences of their selective acceptance of parts of the American way of life might be explored in a follow-up study with the students after they have returned to Saudi Arabia. This might also give attention to the problem of alienation of the returned students from their culture and society. Such alienation may have serious consequences.

In addition, there are implications for the content of the educational curriculum and the feasibility of cross-cultural transfer of knowledge. The findings might call for reevaluation of the educational policies of the Saudi Arabian mission in terms of fields of study needed and opportunities for applying what has been learned in the U.S. If much of the educational content related to creative new ideas, techniques, and technology is not readily applicable when the student takes up a place in society at home, returning students might face serious problems.

The characteristics of age and ability to communicate in English seemed to have significant relationships with some aspects of the attitude objects. This may imply importance for age and language background in determining the sojourn's consequences. A study devoted to exploring the impact of these variables upon the achievement of the initial purposes of the sojourn would also be fruitful in

helping determine institutional policies concerning Saudi Arabian students abroad.

One final note: While Saudi Arabian students at MSU seemed fairly satisfied about their academic work, a problem of ability to communicate sufficiently in English does exist -- in particular, in terms of speaking fluently. This finding might raise questions concerning the adequacy of current methods of teaching English as a second language.

Recommendations

Based on the insights gathered through the present study, the following recommendations are presented. There are two types: suggestions for further research, and suggestions for improving the policies of student-affairs personnel at Michigan State University (MSU) and the Saudi Arabian Educational Mission to the United States.

Suggestions for Further Research

1. A similar study could be conducted with primary emphasis on the quality and quantity of contact, to define adequately whether contact in itself is an intervening variable determining the attitudinal outcome of an individual over a period of time. Analysis of the association between contact in different locations and attitude objects, by controlling for other variables at different periods of time, with individuals of a homogeneous group, might throw some light on the process by

which contact affects attitude.

Most studies on foreign students indicate that the students' experiences in the U.S. are similar in many respects. Of course, the unique features of a given group cannot be ignored; comparative studies of attitude change among different national groups should be fruitful.

2. Sociocultural factors have been neglected in most of the existing research. This is particularly striking considering the explicit acknowledgement of the influence of such factors found in a number of studies. Techniques could be formulated to present a picture of the student culture as an intervening variable determining the impact of the other factors. This may include, also, the study of the reference group to which the student feels attached, as a mediating factor strengthening the commitment to the culture of origin. The significance and meaning of one's culture becomes clear only when one realizes that other choices may be made by others. Indirectly, much more could be done in tracing the impact of the reference group on the students after they've returned home, and their placement in the social structure and organizations they participate in back home. The work of Useem and Useem (1955) provides useful guidelines.

Suggestions for Student-Affairs Policies at MSU and the Saudi Arabian Educational Mission

1. As the study revealed and the researcher observed, language facility remains a concern: The Saudi student at

MSU is uncomfortable with communicating in English. Thus, there is a need for the development of more creative methods of improving students' proficiency in English.

2. To bring about meaningful contact between the sojourning students and the host culture, an intensive program should be designed in a cooperative manner which provides opportunities for both foreign students and American faculty members, students, and administrative staff to get to know each other's culture, needs, and problems. Such an opportunity would facilitate development of social understanding and positive relations. This may, in turn, contribute toward improving international educational exchange and the policies upon which it is based.

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APPENDIX I
THE QUESTIONNAIRE

2407-9 E. Jolly Road
Lansing, MI 48910
(517) 887-6518

November 28, 1983

Dear Brother/Sister:

This questionnaire is a part of a study on the Saudi students at Michigan State University. The purpose of the study is to provide basic information about the Saudi students in the U.S.A., their contact, and their general attitudes towards Americans. By your participation in this study, you are contributing knowledge to science.

The data being collected are to be used in an M.A. thesis at MSU, East Lansing, Michigan.

As your answers will be used only for scientific purposes, your frank opinions and ideas will be most useful. However, the information provided will be highly confidential and you are asked not to mention your name. Please mail it, filled out, in the enclosed envelope. No postage stamp is needed.

Due to the time limitation of such a study, I would greatly appreciate your mailing back the questionnaire or calling me to pick it up within the **next ten days**. Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Dakheel A. Al-Dakheelallah

2407-9 E. Jolly Road
Lansing, MI 48910
(517) 887-6518

December 18, 1983

Dear Brother/Sister:

Attached is a questionnaire that has been distributed to all Saudi students at Michigan State University, East Lansing, two weeks ago, as part of a study on Saudi Students' contact and attitudes towards Americans.

Participation in this study is voluntary, although it is hoped that everyone who received a questionnaire will complete and return it. The quality of the results of the study depends on the number of people who complete and return the questionnaire. If the experiences of all Saudi students are to be reflected in the findings, it is important that everyone responds.

If you have not already completed the questionnaire, I hope that you will complete one so that the data I receive will be as complete as possible. Thank you very much if you have already responded.

As I emphasized in the letter attached to the first questionnaire sent to you, the responses to the survey will be kept completely confidential. The M.A. thesis to be based on the survey will report only the data that has been added together from all of the questionnaires; information from individual questionnaires will not be included.

Again, your cooperation in responding to the questionnaire, if you have not already done so, is most helpful and highly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Dakheel A. Al-Dakheelallah

Enclosure

Most of the following items can be answered by a check mark. Please check (☐) the most accurate answer given, or in some instances the answer which best describes your feelings. A few items require a short written answer.

Your cooperation and frankness are appreciated.

-I-

1. Age, (to the nearest birthday) in years:

- ☐ less than 20
- ☐ 20 to 30
- ☐ 30 to 40
- ☐ over 40

2. Sex: M (☐), F (☐).

3. Marital status: Single (☐), Married (☐).

3a. If married, how many children do you have?

- ☐ none
- ☐ one
- ☐ two
- ☐ three or more

4. Your father's occupation: _____

5. Your father's education:

- ☐ formal
- ☐ informal
- ☐ if formal, what level: _____

6. Compared with Saudi families in general, would you say your family income is:

- ☐ above average
- ☐ average
- ☐ below average

7. Where did you live most of your life backhome?

- ☐ large city
- ☐ small town or village

8. Academic status:

☐ graduate
☐ undergraduate
☐ other (specify) _____

9. Your field of study (major) _____

10. How long have you been in the U.S.?

☐ less than one year
☐ one to two years
☐ three to four years
☐ more than four years

11. How do you feel about your academic work?

☐ very satisfied
☐ satisfied
☐ somewhat satisfied
☐ dissatisfied

-II-

12. Where are you living now?

☐ on campus
☐ off campus

13. What type of housing arrangement do you have now?

☐ alone
☐ with my family, if married
☐ with an American family
☐ dormitory
☐ other type (specify) _____

14. Through what sources of information did you know about Americans, before coming to the U.S.? (check all that apply)

<input type="checkbox"/> T.V.	<input type="checkbox"/> radio	<input type="checkbox"/> movie
<input type="checkbox"/> newspaper	<input type="checkbox"/> magazine	<input type="checkbox"/> books
<input type="checkbox"/> friends	<input type="checkbox"/> relatives	<input type="checkbox"/> stories
<input type="checkbox"/> orientation programs at home		

15. Then, what was your impression about American people prior to your arrival in the U.S.?

- ☐ very favorable
- ☐ favorable
- ☐ somewhat favorable
- ☐ unfavorable
- ☐ very unfavorable

16. Could you say that the sources of information prior to your arrival in the U.S. were:

- ☐ very accurate
- ☐ accurate
- ☐ somewhat accurate
- ☐ inaccurate
- ☐ very inaccurate

-III-

17. In your social contact, how much difficulty do you have in expressing yourself in English?

- ☐ much difficulty
- ☐ some difficulty
- ☐ very little difficulty
- ☐ no difficulty

18. In your social contact, how much difficulty do you have in understanding Americans when they speak?

- ☐ much difficulty
- ☐ some difficulty
- ☐ very little difficulty
- ☐ no difficulty

19. Do you sometimes hesitate to talk to Americans or ask them questions because you think you may not be understood?

- ☐ never
- ☐ rarely
- ☐ occasionally
- ☐ often

20. How do you describe your "proficiency" of the English language?

	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor
Conversation	_____	_____	_____	_____
Reading	_____	_____	_____	_____
Understanding	_____	_____	_____	_____
Lectures (giving (speeches)	_____	_____	_____	_____

-IV-

21. How much of your free-time do you usually spend with the following people, while you are in the United States?

	Most of it	Half of it	Less than half	None
_____with Saudi Arabians	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____with Arabs	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____with foreign people	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____with Americans	_____	_____	_____	_____

22. How often have you talked about the following subjects with Americans, since you have been here?

	Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Often
Academic course work	_____	_____	_____	_____
Literature or art	_____	_____	_____	_____
Family life	_____	_____	_____	_____
Social, economic and political problems	_____	_____	_____	_____
Intellectual or religious matters.	_____	_____	_____	_____

23. How often have you been involved in social actions with Americans such as:

<u>Type of social action</u>	<u>Often</u>	<u>Sometimes</u>	<u>Rarely</u>	<u>Never</u>
Stop and talk when you meet.	___	___	___	___
Playing games, sharing coffee or meal together.	___	___	___	___
Watching movie, concert, sport events or going to public services, commercial establishment together.	___	___	___	___
Getting together on special occasions such as Thanksgiving, Christmas, etc.	___	___	___	___
Having an informal chat together in their home or your home.	___	___	___	___
Having a dinner or a party together at their home or at your home, or even outside.	___	___	___	___
Participation in campus activities.	___	___	___	___
Traveling together.	___	___	___	___

24. Since you have been here, have you visited any American families in their homes?

___never
___rarely
___occasionally
___often

25. During your stay in the U.S., how many American organizations, clubs, or conferences have you attended?

___none
___one
___two
___three or more

26. How often do you read American publications such as daily newspapers, weekly magazines, books, etc.?

- ☐ every day
- ☐ two-three times a week
- ☐ once a week
- ☐ never

27. How often do you watch T.V. programs?

- ☐ every day
- ☐ two-three times a week
- ☐ once a week
- ☐ never

28. Among your selected readings and T.V. programs, which are the subjects most attractive to you? (check all that apply)

- ☐ news
- ☐ entertainment
- ☐ sports
- ☐ educationally oriented
- ☐ socially and culturally oriented

29. As you think of everyday living experiences here, how do you feel toward Americans in general?

- ☐ very friendly
- ☐ friendly
- ☐ somewhat friendly
- ☐ unfriendly

30. From the list of words below, please pick the one which seems to you to be most typical of Americans.

- ☐ humanistic
- ☐ considerate
- ☐ materialistic
- ☐ prejudiced

31. How have you seen the average American generally when he/she comes to work?

- ☐ very hard worker
- ☐ hard worker
- ☐ moderate worker
- ☐ lazy

32. When it comes to his/her own interest, what do you think of the average American's honesty?

- ☐ very honest
- ☐ honest
- ☐ dishonest
- ☐ very dishonest

33. From your experience, how easy did you find it to get along with Americans?

- ☐ very easy to get along with
- ☐ easy to get along with
- ☐ difficult to get along with
- ☐ very difficult to get along with

-VI-

34. Generally speaking, how strong do the family ties seem to you in the U.S.?

- ☐ very strong
- ☐ strong
- ☐ somewhat strong
- ☐ weak
- ☐ very weak

35. In terms of self-independence education, how do you think of the way American families raise their children?

- ☐ much self-independence
- ☐ moderate self-independence
- ☐ little self-independence
- ☐ no self-independence at all

36. To what degree do you think that American children obey and respect their parent's authority?

- ☐ very high respect
- ☐ high respect
- ☐ some respect
- ☐ little respect
- ☐ no respect at all

37. To what extent do you think that American husbands and wives have mutual respect for each other in their decisions regarding everyday living events?

- ☐ very high respect
- ☐ high respect
- ☐ some respect
- ☐ little respect
- ☐ no respect at all

38. To what extent do you think that persons and their parents feel emotions toward each other?

- ☐ very strong
- ☐ strong
- ☐ somewhat strong
- ☐ weak
- ☐ very weak

39. How would you describe the emotional feelings of American brothers and sisters toward each other as they express them through occasions and events?

- ☐ very strong
- ☐ strong
- ☐ somewhat strong
- ☐ weak
- ☐ very weak

40. In the U.S., how strong an obligation would a person feel if one of his/her parents asked him to do something that required a personal sacrifice?

- ☐ very strong
- ☐ strong
- ☐ somewhat strong
- ☐ little
- ☐ not at all

41. If it is a case where a person who asked him is a member of a family other than his/her own parents, how strong an obligation would there be?

- ☐ very strong
- ☐ strong
- ☐ somewhat strong
- ☐ little
- ☐ not at all

42. In terms of personal relations, what would you say about the tolerance of American young people in dealing with elderly members of their families?

- ☐ very highly tolerant
- ☐ highly tolerant
- ☐ moderately tolerant
- ☐ somewhat tolerant
- ☐ not at all

-VII-

As a student involved in academic interaction with an educational community, exposed to various patterns of relations and acquainted with the general rules and regulations governing such relations:

43. In general, how would you describe student-instructor relations in the U.S.?

- ☐ very formal
- ☐ formal
- ☐ somewhat formal
- ☐ informal
- ☐ very informal

44. To what extent do you think that American students have respect for their instructors?

- ☐ very high respect
- ☐ high respect
- ☐ some respect
- ☐ little respect
- ☐ no respect at all

45. To what extent do you think that American instructors have respect for their students?

- ☐ very high respect
- ☐ high respect
- ☐ some respect
- ☐ little respect
- ☐ no respect at all

46. How tolerant do you think American instructors are in accepting a student's disagreement?

- ☐ very highly tolerant
- ☐ highly tolerant
- ☐ moderately tolerant
- ☐ somewhat tolerant
- ☐ not tolerant at all

47. To what extent do you think instructors are personally interested in student's achievements?

- ☐ very highly interested
- ☐ highly interested
- ☐ interested
- ☐ little interest

48. In American schools, how well do the students get along with the instructors?

- ☐ very well
- ☐ well
- ☐ somewhat well
- ☐ difficult
- ☐ very difficult

49. As you think of your experiences in the U.S., how would you describe the degree of your agreement or disagreement with the following statements?

A. If I had an influence upon the cultural values governing family relations in our society, I would develop patterns of relationships among our family members similar to what exists in the American society.

☐strongly agree
☐agree
☐somewhat agree
☐disagree
☐strongly disagree

B. If I could influence the educational policies of education, especially higher education in our society, I would insist that Saudi educational policies should adopt regulations which govern the student-instructor relationship in a manner similar to what exists in American schools.

☐strongly agree
☐agree
☐somewhat agree
☐disagree
☐strongly disagree

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PROMPT ATTENTION

AND I WISH YOU A SUCCESSFUL ACADEMIC YEAR.