PERCEIVED CHALLENGES IN UNIVERSITY BRANCH CAMPUSES:

A CASE STUDY OF FIVE WESTERN CAMPUSES IN A GCC STATE

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Perceived Challenges in University Branch Campuses:

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Abstract

This study explores the challenges perceived by senior officers in Western university branch campuses in a Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) state and aims to provide insights into how leaders dealt with them. Thus, the study addresses four research questions. First, how campus senior officers perceive the challenges? Second, to what extent are these challenges a result of operating in a different cultural context? Third, how do senior officers deal with these challenges and maintain the quality of their home universities? Finally, how can the study findings be theorised to inform future policy and practice?

As a form of transnational higher education, some of the GCC states have established branch campuses of leading Western universities to provide quality higher education to their citizens locally and build knowledge economies. Campus managers, usually from their home Western universities, face challenges related to the local cultural context. These challenges include the GCC state societal views of the campuses, the Western University approach to co-education, the GCC state development efforts to grow a Knowledge Economy through quality Western-style education, and national students' academic preparation.

This research was conducted as an exploratory qualitative multiple case study of five branch campuses. Data were collected through interviews with senior officers from the campuses and the host organization in the GCC state, and the five campuses' annual reports. Data were analysed through open and axial coding. Then thematic analysis was used to identify themes from the data.

The study revealed that the major challenges for campus officers are recruiting academically strong students from the pool of citizens, and understanding the local culture and adjusting aspects of the curriculum to fit the local context especially for campuses that offer social sciences and arts programmes. Campus officers engaged in efforts to make school students more qualified for admission by the campuses, and some leaders made adjustments to the curriculum to better suit their students' abilities.

Keywords: transnational higher education; university branch campuses; challenges; culture; co-education; Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)

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I thank God for giving me the strength and patience to complete this study. This is a dream coming true.

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List of Abbreviations

BERA	British Educational Research Association
C-BERT	The Cross-Border Education Research Team
CBHE	Cross-Border Higher Education
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
EdD	Doctor of Education
GCC	Gulf Cooperation Council
IIE	Institute of International Education
HEI	Higher Education Institute
OBHE	Observatory on Borderless Higher Education
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths
TNHE	Trans-National Higher Education
UAE	United Arab Emirates
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization

Glossary

Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)	A council that includes the countries surrounding the Arabian Gulf -Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates
International branch campus	A branch of a university in another country
Education hub	A cluster of education institutions in one location
Home university	A university with branch campuses in other countries
Host state	A state where branch campuses of universities are located
Host organization	An organization in a host state which acts on behalf of the state in handling agreements with branch campuses
Trans-National Higher Education (TNHE)/Cross-Border Higher Education (CBHE)	Higher education offered beyond the borders of a state/nation

Chapter One-Background and Context

1. Research problem

The beginning of the twenty-first century witnessed the emergence of Transnational Higher Education (TNHE) or the provision of higher education to students in a country other than that where the education provider is based (Huang, 2007). This takes the forms of online education, double degrees and university branch campuses among others (Wood et al., 2005). These avenues of higher education provision involve crossing national borders and interacting with students in different cultural contexts which has implications for campus senior officers (Lane, 2011a) many of whom come from the home university. University senior officers are already dealing with a number of challenges such as commercialization, structural adjustment, quality assurance, and the information technology revolution (Carnoy, 1999). When they venture into new countries by establishing branch campuses there, they face more, and perhaps, a different set of challenges (Altbach, 2010a; Lane, 2011a).

2. Aims

This study is an attempt to explore the challenges perceived by senior officers of five Western university branch campuses and officials of their host organization in one of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) States. The aim of this study is to identify the perceived challenges in these campuses, understand the extent to which these challenges emerge because the campuses are located in a different cultural context than their home universities, understand how campus senior officers deal with these challenges, and explore how findings of the study can be theorised to inform future policy and practice in TNHE provision in general and the branch campus model in particular. This study might be useful for practitioners, university and college senior officers, host country officials, and researchers interested in studying transnational higher education issues, especially those related to university branch campuses.

3. Background and context setting

In this section I provide an overview of the history of higher education in the GCC region and discuss the emergence and development of the branch campus phenomenon. Then I present the context of the state where the study was conducted and provide some contextual information about the case branch campuses.

3.1. History of higher education in the GCC region

The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) was established in 1971. Its goal, initially, was to provide the countries surrounding the Arabian Gulf - Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) - with "coordination as they developed trade and fiscal monetary policy cooperatively" (Donn & Al-Manthri, 2010, p.32). The combined population of the GCC states was 50.1 million in 2014 (Gulf Research Center, 2016) and most of them rely heavily on income from natural resources, namely oil and gas, to ensure welfare for their citizens by providing free education, health and other services (Donn & Al-Manthri, 2010).

The majority of the labour force in the GCC states is comprised of skilled and unskilled expatriate workers who come to these states for limited periods of time (Gonzalez et al., 2008). There has been a traditional formal education system in each state but over the past two decades major changes in school and higher education systems were introduced to improve the education outcomes (Donn & Al-Manthri, 2010). Improvements in higher education have been profound in most of these states (Gonzalez et al., 2008).

Over the past two decades, the number of state, private and international higher education institutions (HEIs) in this region has grown remarkably with Saudi Arabia, the largest state, moving from under ten HEIs to over

100 in less than a decade (Romani, 2009). Willoughby (2008) attributes this higher education boom in the region to demands coming from various internal sources including the increasing demand for Western-style higher education offered locally, and the growing labour market and associated demands for skilled graduates. This coincided with governments' attempts to create knowledge-based economies in the GCC states (Gonzalez et al., 2008). Allowing the establishment of private HEIs and inviting renowned universities to establish campuses in the region were considered viable options for most of the GCC states (Alpen Capital, 2010).

3.2. The emergence and development of the branch campus phenomenon

The second half of the twentieth century witnessed the development of a global market in international education (Mazzarol et al., 2003). Internationalization of higher education was characterized by mobility of students, scholars, and researchers between different countries until the early 1990s when TNHE became an increasingly important part of internationalization of higher education in several countries (Huang, 2007) and mobility of programmes and, later mobility of institutions, across state borders emerged (Edwards, 2007).

TNHE is defined by the United Nations Education, Science and Culture Organization (UNESCO) and the Council of Europe as "all types of higher education study programmes … in which the learners are located in a country different from the one where the awarding institution is based" (2000, p.2 in Naidoo, 2009, p.314).

According to Naidoo (2006) and Mazzarol et al. (2003) TNHE takes several forms such as the following: 1) online education in which an institution offers its programmes virtually through use of information and communication technologies to students in other countries; 2) double

degrees in which two institutions in two different countries collaborate to offer a degree in one of these countries or in a third country; or 3) international branch campuses where an institution establishes a campus in another country where it provides its programmes and awards degrees.

Although there is no universally agreed definition of a branch campus (Becker, 2010), there have been some attempts to define this phenomenon. The report published by the Observatory on Borderless Higher Education (OBHE) in 2006 provides what seems to be a comprehensive definition. The authors state:

> *A branch campus is an off-shore entity of a higher education institution operated by the institution or through a joint venture in which the institution is a partner in the name of the foreign institution. Upon successful completion of the course programme, which is fully undertaken at the unit abroad, students are awarded a degree from the foreign institution.* (Verbik & Merkley, 2006, p.3)

In 2012, OBHE published another report in which the authors acknowledged that it is difficult to have a permanent definition of a branch campus because of the constant changes in activities, forms and parameters of collaboration. However, they adopted the following slightly different definition of a branch campus:

> *A higher education institution that is located in another country from the institution which either originated it or operates it, with some physical presence in the host country, and which awards at least one degree in the host country that is accredited in the country of the originating institution* (Lawton & Katsomitros, 2012, p.5).

This definition reflects some level of maturity of branch campuses in 2012. The report authors refer to a branch campus as 'a higher education institution' as opposed to an 'off-shore entity of a higher education

institution' in the earlier definition. They also highlight 'the physical presence' in the home country which differentiates branch campuses from other TNHE activities such as online degrees. 'Degree accreditation' appears in the 2012 definition which reflects concerns raised by scholars such as Altbach (2010a, 2012), Kinser (2011) and Shams and Huisman (2012) regarding accreditation of degrees granted by branch campuses.

In the same year Lane and Kinser (2012) define a branch campus as

> *An entity that is owned, at least in part, by a foreign education provider; operated in the name of the foreign education provider; engages in at least some face-to-face teaching; and provides access to an entire academic programme that leads to a credential awarded by the foreign education provider. (p.2)*

This definition combines aspects of the two previous definitions. It refers to a branch campus as 'an entity owned by a foreign education provider' and also highlights the 'physical presence' in the host country demonstrated by 'the face-to-face teaching'. The ownership aspect of the branch campus highlighted in this definition differentiates branch campuses with long term commitment and investment from short term ventures that rely on renting facilities. This is a more generic definition of branch campuses that captures the main aspects of the phenomenon.

In this thesis, I will adopt the definition provided by Verbik and Merkley (2006) as it combines generic as well as specific aspects of the branch campus phenomenon. It refers to branch campuses as joint ventures which can encompass all variations of agreements but also highlights the physical presence of a branch in another country. Thus, it excludes other types of TNHE activities such as online degrees. This definition clearly states that the foreign institution awards the degrees in which case double degree arrangements are not included.

By reviewing all three definitions a number of key elements defining international branch campuses emerge: 1) the campuses bear the name of their home institutions; 2) they have an actual physical presence in the host country; and 3) they award full degrees to students (Lane & Kinser, 2012). These elements are also identified by the American Council on Education (ACE) as specific characteristics for an institution to be a branch campus (Green & Koch, 2009, p.2). The common element among these views is the physical presence outside of an institution's home country, hence the link to TNHE as defined above.

Altbach (2007) argues that university branch campuses are booming as universities see a huge market by offering their degrees in other countries (Green & Koch, 2009). Since the beginning of this century, the number of branch campuses around the world has grown remarkably (Altbach, 2010b). A report published by OBHE estimated the number of branch campuses around the world in 2009 at 162, which demonstrates a 43 per cent increase from 2006 (Becker, 2010). The Cross-Border Education Research Team (C-BERT) at the State University of New York at Albany estimates the number of branch campuses in operation in 2014 at slightly over 200 (C-BERT, 2014).

The increase in the number of branch campuses is associated with an increase in the number of host countries engaged in branch campus agreements (Naidoo, 2009). The GCC States, Singapore, China, and more recently India, are identifying themselves as educational centres and are attracting international HEIs to establish campuses in the newly created hubs in these countries (Green & Koch, 2009; Altbach, 2010a). The UAE and China are leading the way by being hosts to 34 and 32 branch campuses respectively, followed by Singapore (15) and Qatar (10) (C-BERT, 2014).

3.3. The case nation state and branch campuses

It is important to indicate at the outset of this section that the ethical approval provided by the University of Leicester for this study dictated that the state and the participating branch campuses remain anonymous during the study to ensure the protection of the participants' identities. This has limited my ability to provide detailed contextual information about the state and the branch campuses to avoid potential identification of institutions or individuals. Therefore, I used words related to the weather and natural phenomena as pseudonyms for the university branch campuses (e.g. Tornado University, Wind University, etc.) and Arabic names as pseudonyms for the participants, most of whom are not Arab.

This study was conducted in a GCC state which is a host to a number of branch campuses. The state has a large private non-profit organisation supported by the government that plays a leading role in establishing branch campuses in the state. This organization is a host to most branch campuses in the state. Each campus provides undergraduate programmes in one or more areas that its home university is well-known for. These programmes have been identified by the host organisation as critical to human development in the state and necessary for its move towards a knowledge-based economy (Lane, 2010b). These programmes include engineering, business, computer science, information systems, medicine, international relations, journalism, communications, and design arts. More recently, most campuses have started to offer one or more Master's programmes in areas related to their undergraduate programmes.

As reflected in the state's national vision, the leadership of the host state believe in the importance of moving to a knowledge-based economy as it is more sustainable than a carbon-based one. Like other GCC states, human development in the host state, in the form of quality education and social services, is of paramount importance to leaders (Gonzalez et al., 2008).

Improving the quality of the K-12 education system and increasing the local offerings of quality higher education programmes are manifestations of this.

The agreements with the campuses stipulate that the host organization cover all the start-up and infrastructure costs and contributes largely to the operating costs of the campuses (Altbach, 2010b; Lane, 2010a). Each campus initially operates out of a temporary building until a purpose-built facility is provided by the host organization. The host organization also provides and manages shared student and staff housing and recreational facilities that serve all branch campuses.

This type of agreement is different from agreements in other countries even within the GCC region. For example, in another GCC state, universities rent facilities and bear most of the operating costs of their campuses in return for tax exemption and total profit repatriation offered by the state (Willoughby, 2008). In this case, universities are taking the risk of establishing campuses without stable financial support which threatens their campuses' sustainability (Altbach, 2007, 2010a). This has led to the closure of two campuses in one of the GCC states (Lane, 2010a).

The host state in this study follows a partnership model whereby universities are supported by the state to ensure they do not struggle financially (Willoughby, 2008) since renowned universities will not take the risk of establishing a campus that might fail for financial or other reasons (Lane & Kinser, 2012). However, the investment that the host state makes is huge compared to the number of graduates who obtain degrees from these campuses. This has drawn remarkable criticism to this model (Altbach, 2010b).

There are a few other Western branch campuses hosted by the same organization but they only offer postgraduate programmes or executive

education courses that target government employees and business executives. These branches were not included in the study because they are very limited in scope and have been recently established. A small number of government ministries and other organisations in this state host one branch campus each. These campuses provide educational programmes in areas related to the business of their host ministry or organisation in order to support capacity building for their host and provide qualified graduates for future employment by these organisations.

This study focused on five branch campuses of US universities hosted by the large private non-profit organisation because they have a lot in common. They all operate under a single host organisation; have similar agreements with the host; deal with the same officials there; and share the housing and recreational facilities provided by the host organisation. Thus, comparison of views and challenges across campuses would be meaningful. The other campuses in the state are hosted by a different organisation each with agreements that vary according to the host organization. They were not included in this study as it will be difficult to compare views and challenges across campuses with different hosts.

The campuses included in this study do not fall under the oversight of the Ministry of Education and Higher Education in the state and are not subject to accreditation or quality assurance by the Ministry. However, they strive to maintain the quality standards of their home universities as their degrees are issued by their home universities in the US and are acknowledged in the host state without the need for degree equivalency. This is not the case with degrees offered by any other university outside the nation state. These need to go through a local degree equivalency process. Each of the participating campuses is governed by a joint board of governors comprised of members from the host organisation and the home university, usually with the campus Dean as a non-voting member.

These branch campuses work with the national university and other HEIs as well as government and private sector entities on joint projects and initiatives that aim at enhancing human capacity in the state. Campus faculty sometimes act as consultants to government and private entities and provide guidance in development projects relevant to the programmes they offer. Some Deans and other senior faculty and staff members serve on boards of organizations and companies in the host state.

Branch campuses deploy faculty and staff from the home university and sometimes hire from the region as needed but in most cases senior officers of the branches (Deans and Assistant/Associate Deans) are deployed from the home university (Witte 2010a, Lane, 2011a). Each campus has a management structure comprised of a Dean, sometimes referred to as Dean and Chief Executive Officer (CEO); a number of Associate Deans for various functions such as education, academic affairs or a specific programme; and a number of Assistant Deans for functions such as admissions and student affairs (annual reports of the five campuses). Given the relatively small size of these campuses, some members of the senior management team are responsible for more than one function such as operations and information. The campuses have been established over a ten-year period and senior officers in most of these campuses stay for a few years before they return to the home university or retire.

These branch campuses are relatively small in size with a mixed-gender student body comprised of citizens of the state and students whose parents are expatriates living in the state. A small number of international students are enrolled in some of these campuses. These students move to the host state for the duration of their programmes only.

4. Identification of the problem and rationale for doing the research

In TNHE provision in general and branch campuses in particular a number of challenges have been identified in the literature. The difficulty to adapt to cultural values and norms in the host country (Shams & Huisman, 2012; Wang, 2008) and host country's expectations that branch campuses will support its development goals in return for the country's financial support (Chalmers, 2011) are important issues that home universities consider. Recruitment of local students and their ability to adapt to and succeed in a Western-style educational environment is another important issue (Stasz, et al., 2007; Wang, 2008). The appropriateness of the home university curricula for students in other cultural contexts is another concern (Edwards, 2007).

Shams and Huisman (2012) categorise these issues under three main areas: a) curriculum and staffing, b) cultural-societal distance, and c) regulatory distance, and argue that the main challenge for branch campuses is the dilemma of standardization with the home university versus adaptation to the local context. This study will hopefully provide insights into the challenges perceived by senior managers of the participating campuses in this state and ways they deal with these challenges.

5. What the research contributes

Higher education challenges have been discussed widely in the literature (Bartell, 2003; Hughey, 2003; Goldring & Greenfield, 2002) but TNHE in the form of branch campuses is a new phenomenon and an under-researched area (Wood et al., 2005; Girdzijauskaite & Radzeviciene, 2014). However, several scholars such as Altbach, Lane, Kinser, Knight, Wilkins, Huisman and Shams have recently started writing about issues related to branch campuses. Most branch campuses in the Middle East were

established in the beginning of this century (Lane, 2010a) and most research on branch campuses is part of policy research on education systems in countries where branch campuses form a major part of the system such as the UAE and Qatar (Gonzalez et al., 2008).

There are a few publications that address branch campus challenges such as McBurnie and Ziguras (2007), Shams and Huisman (2012), Wilkins and Huisman (2012) but they do not focus on campuses in the Middle East or the Gulf region in particular. This study is an attempt to fill the gap in understanding the challenges in branch campuses specific to the GCC region and how campus senior officials are dealing with them.

The recent closure of a number of branch campuses around the world (C-BERT, 2012) and two in the GCC region raise questions about the volatility of this TNHE model (Altbach, 2010a). University leaders are concerned about the future of the branch campus model, especially in countries where competition among HEIs is fierce and where pre-university education systems are not producing students with the skills required for studying in a challenging university atmosphere (Altbach, 2010a). Host countries and HEI leaders need to understand the challenges they will be dealing with before they enter into branch campus agreements, and I hope that this study contribute to filling this gap and support future policy and decision making regarding establishing new campuses both in the GCC region and in the larger Middle East.

6. The conceptual framework

Western universities which establish branch campuses overseas aim to improve their image, expand their footprints globally, and find new revenue streams to support their budgets (Knight, 2013). On the other hand, states which host branch campuses aim to build local capacity, establish a knowledge economy, and improve their images as education

hubs (Knight, 2007; Altbach & Knight, 2007). There are fundamental tensions between these two sets of aims that have an impact on branch campuses.

Branch campuses of Western universities established in the GCC region operate in a context that is new to their management (Lane, 2011a). Senior officers of these campuses who usually come from the home Western universities operate in an environment with different cultural, socio-economic, demographic, and political characteristics (Donn & Almanthri, 2013; Altbach, 2010a). This creates a number of challenges. First, conservative groups in the society might view these campuses negatively (Wang, 2008) especially as they adopt a co-educational model which clashes with local values related to gender-segregation supported by the society. Second, branch campuses offer education that encourages questioning and critical thinking through constructivist teaching which challenges the education provided by local schools that relies on memorization and didactic teaching (Brewer et al, 2007).

Third, host states expect branch campuses to support the achievement of the states' objectives by providing quality education without threatening the cultural fabric of the society (Shams & Huisman, 2012). This can pressure branch campuses to admit local students who might not be qualified enough to enrol in the academically challenging programmes offered by the campuses (Altbach 2010a), and adjust the curricula developed in the home Western university to fit the local cultural context (Wang, 2008).

In the meantime, home Western universities expect branch campuses to maintain the quality standards of the universities. This requires the standardization of admission, teaching and curriculum standards (Shams & Huisman, 2012). As such, campus senior officers are expected to achieve the objectives of the host states without lowering their home

university standards. Operating campuses of Western universities in this context is challenging (Lane, 2011a) and requires striking a balance between demands of the host country from one side, and requirements to maintain the education quality of the home university from the other (Shams & Huisman, 2012). See Figure 1.1.

Figure 1.1   Conceptual Framework
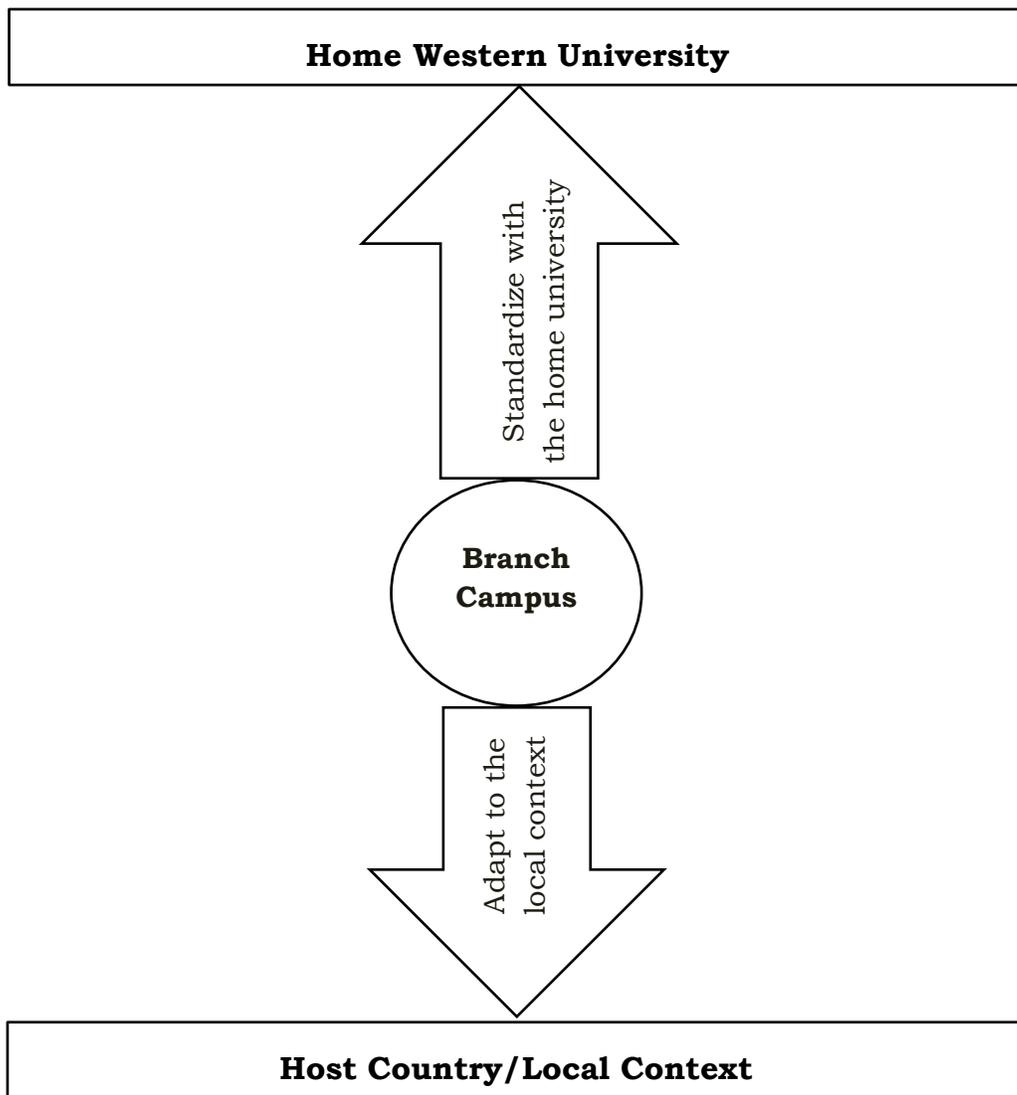
7. The research approach

This study focuses on the challenges perceived by senior officers of five Western university branch campuses that offer undergraduate education in one of the GCC states. The study sample includes twenty-one participants from the campuses (Deans, Assistant/Associate Deans/other senior officers) as well as four senior officials from the host organization who are dealing directly with campus officers. Data gathered through interviews with these individuals were compared with data gathered from a document review of the branch campuses' annual reports and other documents to further understand the issues raised by the participants and enhance the trustworthiness of the research.

I have conducted this study within the parameters of the interpretivist paradigm because the study aims to explore the challenges perceived by senior officers of university branch campuses in a new cultural context, the impact of the local culture on the campuses, and how the officers deal with such challenges. This required understanding of these perceived challenges through the views of the people involved in dealing with them. Thus, the interpretivist paradigm provided the appropriate frame for this study (Creswell, 2003).

The study lent itself to qualitative research methods since its aim is to understand a phenomenon and its various aspects (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998) which was achieved by understanding the views of the individuals (campus senior officers) involved in aspects of this phenomenon. Qualitative data enabled me to identify patterns and themes that facilitated my understanding of the perceived challenges and how senior officers dealt with them (Hoepfl, 1997). The limited number of participants and the level of detail needed to understand the phenomenon made qualitative methods appropriate for this study.

7.1. Research strategy

I have selected the (multiple) case study strategy for this research since the research study aims to investigate a phenomenon in a unique context for a small number of institutions at a certain point in time which are characteristics of case study research (Bassey, 1999). The main objective of a case study is to capture the case in its uniqueness and represent it in its own terms (Yin, 2003). The study focused on the perceived challenges that are unique to the context of the host state and the five campuses in this state and presented them as viewed by the individuals who are directly involved in dealing with them.

Case studies generally aim for a high level of detail that enables deep understanding of the phenomenon in question (Soy, 1997). This level of detail can be obtained through in-depth interviews which can be an efficient tool for collecting qualitative data needed for this kind of inquiry (Denscombe, 2007). I have conducted individual face-to-face in-depth semi-structured interviews with the participants to understand their views and experiences regarding the challenges they perceive and how they deal with them. To triangulate and complement the data gathered through the interviews I reviewed annual reports and other official documents of the five participating campuses available on their websites.

7.2. The role of the researcher

I started my career as a teacher of English in 1995 and have taught university students, graduates and individuals interested in improving their English language proficiency. After five years of teaching, I held a management role of English language programmes at an American training institution in my home country, Egypt. Later, I held a leadership position within the institution. I have enjoyed supporting teachers and staff to provide quality education to students.

Although I went through rigorous training as a teacher and later as a programme manager, I was hoping to pursue postgraduate education related to higher education management. In 2005, I moved to the GCC region where I held a scholarship management position and supported hundreds of students in obtaining degrees from universities around the world. This position was an opportunity to learn about Western HEIs and interact with their staff as well as students from the GCC region.

In the meantime, a number of Western universities had branch campuses in the region and a number of other campuses were under construction. Although the model of offering Western-style education in this region was not new given the fact that some American and British K-12 schools have been operating in the region for decades, offering higher education by establishing a branch campus of a university in the region was a rather new model. This model has attracted my attention as it is a very interesting phenomenon to study.

I have been following developments in branch campuses in the region since then and have witnessed the establishment of many such campuses. I have studied issues related to student recruitment in branch campuses for my Master's thesis. I have also read several articles on issues related to branch campuses. These articles appeared in the Journal of Studies in International Education, the Journal of Research in International Education, and International Higher Education among others.

Since I started my EdD programme, I have attended a number of conferences related to TNHE and the branch campus phenomenon such as the British Council's Going Global Conferences where topics related to branch campuses were presented and discussed. I have also given two presentations related to this study in regional conferences. I continue to follow developments of branch campuses and deepen my understanding of related issues in this region.

This knowledge helped me frame the research questions. Also, having contacts in some of the campuses was helpful in gaining access to documents and participants. However, I am aware that this might also have an impact on my objectivity in conducting this study. Since I do not work for or have studied at any of the branch campuses, I approached all of the case campuses without any pre-conceived ideas about the challenges they face and how they deal with them. Also, since I do not work for a higher education institution, I did not assume the existence of any specific challenges in these campuses.

I am also aware that the research I conducted for my Master's thesis and the relevant insights I gained from that research might shape my thinking about this study. However, that research was conducted between 2006 and 2008, a time during which some of the branch campuses in the nation state were in their early years. Challenges might have changed over time and campus officers might have gained more experience in dealing with these challenges. Therefore, I approached this study with fresh eyes and did not assume the existence of any specific challenges in the participating campuses.

7.3. Research ethics

Ethics are very important for any research study, especially those that involve human subjects because participants should not be harmed as a result of their participation in research (Bell, 2005). The key ethical principles in research I have followed in this study are explained in the University of Leicester Ethics Code of Practice (2011) and cover the following aspects: 1) voluntary participation in research and the right to withdraw from the research at any time without having to give reasons; 2) the requirement of informed consent which means that individuals who will participate in the research must be fully informed of the procedures and risks involved in research and agree to participate; 3) the protection of

participants' identities and ensuring that identifying information is not shared with anyone who is not directly involved in the research; 4) ensuring that participants remain anonymous throughout the study; and 5) protection of the participants from any risk of harm as a result of their participation.

I have obtained ethical approval to conduct this study. The ethical approval mandated that participants, institutions and the nation state remain anonymous. This has limited my ability to clearly describe the context of the study. However, I have adhered to the restrictions of the ethical approval. I have also consulted and adhered to the British Educational Research Association's (BERA) ethical guidelines (2011) while conducting this study.

7.4. Data collection and analysis

The study required the collection of qualitative data from senior officers of branch campuses and the host organization. A high level of detail was important when collecting the data in order to gain an in-depth understanding of the challenges perceived by the participants (Yin, 1994). I have used an interview schedule to conduct the semi-structured personal interviews with 21 senior officers (Deans, Assistant/Associate Deans/senior executives) from five campuses in addition to four officials from the host organization who interact with the campus officers.

Prompts and probes were used during the interviews to obtain more information about some topics and further explore some responses. Prompts and probes were used consistently across participants (Bell, 2005) whenever possible. I have recorded and transcribed the interviews and shared the transcripts with the respondents for editing and confirmation (Silverman, 2005). Data collection and analysis will be explained in detail in chapter three.

Data analysis in this study was conducted in two stages. First, data collected through interviews were analysed according to the early stages of the grounded theory approach using open coding followed by axial coding (Miles & Huberman, 1994). However, the data analysis was not extended to further steps of the grounded theory approach (Strauss & Corbin 1990). Instead, the final stage of the analysis was theme analysis (Bell, 2005) through which I was able to identify the main themes related to the perceived challenges and what participants did to deal with such challenges. Annual reports and other official documents of the five branch campuses were reviewed for comparison with data collected through interviews. Analysis of the interview transcripts was done manually but given the large volume of data I used the Nvivo software version 9 to manage the storage, retrieval and analysis of data.

In the presentation of data in chapter four I compared and contrasted the different cases with regards to each theme and also compared and the data from interviews with data from the annual reports whenever possible. I also discussed the themes identified from the data analysis in relation to the relevant literature.

8. Boundaries and limitations

This study focuses on challenges perceived by senior officers of Western branch campuses in one of the Gulf States. The study does not cover other forms of TNHE such as dual degrees, partnership agreements, online learning or other forms of TNHE which do not involve full time physical presence of a foreign institution in another country. The challenges and dynamics in these other forms might be different from those in branch campuses. There are a few home-grown institutions operating within the host organization. These institutions are not part of this study since they are not branches of universities. They are local institutions established by the host organisation.

There are three limitations of this study. First, this study covers the campuses in one GCC state, and although the six states in this region have several cultural, societal and religious commonalities (Donn & Almanthri, 2010), there might be some contextual differences related to economic, or demographic differences that make the findings of this study not fully transferable to branch campuses in other GCC states. Although the objective of this study is not to provide findings that are directly transferrable to other contexts, it is important to highlight this limitation.

Second, interviews were held with senior officials from each campus at the level of Dean or Associate/Assistant Dean. Senior officials might be concerned only with overarching challenges; not operational or student-related challenges that less senior officials are facing. Finally, the campuses that participated in the study have been established over a ten-year period and officers in most of these campuses stay for a few years only before they return to the home university or retire. Founding Deans and other senior officers of the campuses are no longer working at these institutions. Their views would have been useful to understand the perceived challenges in the start-up phase which might be different from challenges senior officers face later.

9. Summary

This study focuses on the challenges perceived by senior officers of five Western university branch campuses that offer undergraduate education in one of the Gulf States. The study aims at identifying these challenges and ways senior officers deal with them. The main challenges covered in this thesis are cultural, societal, and academic challenges. The interpretivist paradigm provided the appropriate frame for this study which required understanding of the perceived challenges through the views of the people involved in dealing with them. This was achieved by

collecting qualitative data to address the research questions and understand the challenges and how senior officers deal with them.

The study lent itself to qualitative research methods since its aim was to understand a phenomenon and its various aspects. This aim was achieved by understanding the views of the individuals involved in this phenomenon. This case study involved 21 senior officers from the five campuses and four senior officials from the host organisation. These individuals participated in in-depth semi-structured qualitative interviews which were analysed using open coding and axial coding. The data collected through interviews were compared with and complemented by data from a document review of the campuses' annual reports. Finally, thematic analysis was conducted to identify the main themes that address the research questions.

The study should be relevant to senior officers of existing university branch campuses in the GCC region as well as prospective ones. It should also be useful to management and staff of host countries and organizations. This case study has identified some lessons that can be useful in planning and establishing branch campuses in the GCC region in the future.

10. Research Questions

The main research question for this study is:

What are the perceived challenges for senior officers of five university branch campuses in a GCC nation state as a result of operating in a different context and what they do to deal with these challenges?

I attempted to answer this question through the following sub-questions:

What are the perceived challenges of senior officers of five branch campuses in a GCC nation state?

To what extent do these challenges emerge because the branch campuses are located in a different cultural context?

How do the senior officers deal with these challenges and maintain the quality of their home universities?

How can findings of this study be theorised to inform future policy and practice?

11. Structure of the thesis

Chapter one lays the foundation of the thesis and presents the research problem and study aims; provides background information and sets the context of the research study. This chapter also discusses the rationale for the study and its new contribution to knowledge. I present the conceptual framework, discuss the research approach, and outline the limitations and boundaries of the study. The chapter ends with a summary of the study and the research questions.

Chapter two presents a review of the relevant literature with a focus on challenges in higher education and branch campuses and how senior officers address these challenges. This chapter provides an overview of challenges in higher education globally and focuses on challenges senior officers face in transnational higher education and specifically in branch campuses. It also covers the impact of the local cultural context on branch campuses, and how campus officers deal with the challenges they face.

Chapter three provides an outline of the research methodology including discussions of the researcher's world view, research paradigms with a focus on interpretivism, research methods with a focus on qualitative methods, research strategies with a focus on the case study strategy, and data collection and analysis methods. In this chapter I also discuss trustworthiness of the study and ethical issues.

Chapter four is devoted to the presentation and analysis of data collected during the study. The chapter presents the data collected from interviews with campus officers and host country officials, as well as documents relevant to the research questions. The chapter also provides a discussion of the data presented and how the evidence compares and contrasts with the literature.

The final chapter provides a discussion of the findings that emerged from this study which are relevant to the research questions. The chapter also provides a conclusion of the study, and recommendations for future policy and practice. It provides a reflection from the researcher on the experience of conducting the study and discusses areas of further research.

Chapter Two-Literature Review

Chapter Two-Literature Review

In this chapter I present a review of the literature pertinent to challenges in branch campuses. The review will focus on the societal views and acceptance of Western branch campuses, the adoption of a co-educational model in conservative societies, the recruitment of local students and their ability to adapt to and succeed in a Western-style educational environment, teaching the curricula of Western universities to students in a different context, and the navigation of cultural values, norms and expectations in the host country and the requirements of the home Western university. I also review literature related to the impact of the cultural context on the campuses, and how senior officers deal with the challenges they face. This review is the basis upon which the study was conceptualised and the research questions developed.

1. Introduction

For centuries universities were stable environments in which change occurred slowly (Davies, et al., 2001) but the growing number of higher education providers around the world and the variety of offerings, modes of study and forms of collaboration send a clear signal that higher education is changing (Wood et al., 2005). Recently HEIs have been facing profound changes driven by several factors such as "globalisation, technology, the knowledge economy, a more competitive environment, scarcer resources, increasing demands and the need to meet diverse stakeholders' interests" (Crosthwaite, 2010, p.1). More specifically, during the last two decades, "universities worldwide have come under increasing pressures to adapt to rapidly changing social, technological, economic and political forces ..." (Bartell, 2003, p.43). Although HEIs have been criticised for their resistance to change, it seems that the aforementioned factors have forced HEIs to accept change, especially as they contribute to building knowledge societies (Meyer, 2002).

1.1. The impact of the local context on universities

Adapting to social, economic and political forces has an impact on universities. Goldring and Greenfield (2002) argue that leadership in higher education is complicated by the dynamic contexts (social, economic and policy) in which institutions operate. Therefore, Ringer (2001) highlights the importance of studying not only the knowledge and worldview the education system is promoting, but also the ways in which knowledge and worldviews are connected to the actors in the various aspects of the local context (social, economic, political, cultural, intellectual, gender and religious).

However, Enders (2004) argues that social, political, economic and cultural factors at the local level, which have always determined the character of HEIs, are currently being challenged by internationalization of higher education. He asserts that "internationalisation is contributing to, if not leading, a process of rethinking the social, cultural and economic roles of higher education" (p.361-362). Marginson (2006) agrees that internationalization has affected many aspects of higher education.

As education systems serve their societies, there are tensions when HEIs engage in internationalisation activities beyond the boundaries of their societies (Delanty, 2001). Attention recently given by university leaders to internationalisation seems to create pressure from the society to ensure that efforts to internationalise do not come at the expense of achieving the society's goals (Smith & Webster, 1997). On the other hand, HEIs engaged in internationalisation activities are sometimes viewed with suspicion by the new societies they serve because of cultural, and/or religious differences that challenge values and behaviours in these societies (Shams & Huisman, 2012). Therefore, HEI managers need to clearly identify these challenges and carefully navigate the tensions with the societies they serve, whilst meeting standards of their universities.

1.2. Internationalization of higher education and the branch campus model

Internationalisation of higher education is a new and growing research field (de Wit, 2002). The various dynamics and aspects of internationalization in higher education have recently attracted researchers to focus on issues related to virtual education (Huang 2007; Wood et al., 2005), the branch campus phenomenon (Lane & Kinser, 2009; Altbach & Knight 2007; Shams & Huisman, 2012), and collaborative agreements in higher education provision (Mazzarol et al., 2003; Naidoo, 2009). Research on these topics aims to understand and address the professional obstacles and challenges related to these new modes of higher education. This thesis focuses on one aspect of internationalisation of higher education, namely branch campuses.

Branch campuses are considered the most recent form of internationalization of higher education (Naidoo, 2009) which Knight (2007) and Lane (2010a; 2011b) call 'cross-border education'. Universities from the developed world are usually asked by developing world countries to set up branch campuses locally, in most cases with the aim of improving higher education provision in the host country and developing local capacity (Naidoo, 2009; Huang, 2007). Other rationales for establishing branch campuses include the development of research in the host country (Altbach, 2010b), the potential effect on local HEIs that are encouraged to improve their education standards (Witte, 2010a), and creating a prestigious image of the host country (Altbach, 2007, Lane & Kinser, 2009). There are fundamental tensions between these different aims which have implications for the branch campuses.

Crossing national borders and interacting with students in different cultural contexts has implications for university leaders (Lane & Kinser, 2011; Witte, 2010a). Lane and Kinser (2011, p.2) state that "Those leading

and working at IBCs [International Branch Campuses] face challenges unlike those confronted by their colleagues on the home campus. Not only do these individuals face unique environmental conditions; they also have to find ways to balance local demands with the expectations of the home campus."

This is clarified by Shams and Huisman (2012) who argue that local demands are difficult to meet while maintaining the standards of the home university. However, Wood (2011) believes that some IBCs have managed to not only create a similar education experience for their students but also integrate them in the culture of the home university. Establishing a branch campus of an institution in a different cultural context can create some unique challenges, and careful planning for entry into a different environment and operating a branch campus are critical for the success of this initiative (Harding & Lammey, 2011).

The second section of this review of the literature provides brief historical background on education in the GCC region. The third section addresses challenges in higher education and focuses on those in the branch campus model. The final section provides an overview of how HEI managers deal with the challenges they face.

2. Higher Education in the GCC region: historical and contextual background

Higher education in the Middle East has changed dramatically since the late 1950s when Middle Eastern countries started to achieve independence. Initially, governments established national universities to provide skilled workforce. These universities offered free education to a small number of citizens. However, private universities were later allowed to operate to meet the increasing demand for higher education and to fill some gaps in programme offerings at state universities (Abdeljalil, 2004).

Since the 1970s the GCC states have been sponsoring some of their citizens to study in Western universities around the world, especially the US (Abouammoh, 2012) but more recently, GCC governments have realized that they also need quality higher education offered locally (Abdeljalil, 2004). For cultural and social reasons in the GCC states, many female students cannot live alone in a foreign country (Willoughby, 2008) as it is considered inappropriate for families to send their daughters to Western countries at a rather early age.

Developments in the international arena also had an impact on higher education options for GCC citizens. In 2001, when the terrorist attacks on the United States, the top destination of GCC students, took place many Arab students returned home and many others were denied visas to go the US or other Western countries to study. The need to establish local branch campuses of Western universities grew and was viewed as a viable option for the GCC states that can afford the financial burden associated with this undertaking (Donn & Al Manthri, 2010; Willoughby, 2008).

Gonzalez, et. al, (2008) argue that GCC governments are not satisfied with the outcomes of their education systems which, in spite of large financial spending, are not producing graduates with the skills needed to meet labour market needs and contribute to development efforts of these states. Additionally, the growing expatriate populations in the GCC states seek quality higher education for their children but might not afford or be willing to send their children to study abroad (Willoughby, 2008).

For the reasons mentioned above, Most GCC states have invited renowned universities to establish local branch campuses (Willoughby, 2008; Donn & Al-Manthri, 2010). Although these states adopted various approaches to establishing branch campuses, in most cases the host countries cover most of the start-up costs of these campuses which amount in some cases to several million dollars (Lane, 2010; Altbach, 2007). This investment is

an attempt by these states to develop their human capital and reduce reliance on income from natural resources, namely oil and gas, on which they have been relying for decades (Gonzalez et al., 2008). Stasz, et al, (2007) argue that developing human capital will help the GCC states diversify their economies by having skilled workforce in several areas; rely more on local than imported labour; and have a stronger private sector.

3. Challenges in university branch campuses

In the last two decades of the twentieth century higher education has witnessed profound changes such as increasing numbers of students, demands for accountability, the impact of new technologies, among others (Altbach & Davis, 1999). The rapid socio-economic changes of the twenty-first century have also imposed major challenges in several aspects of higher education, especially in governance, focus of missions, curricula, research, and financing (Shin & Harman, 2009). These changes manifest themselves clearly in the GCC region given the major development efforts these states are currently undertaking. Therefore, operating a higher education institution in the current competitive environment and navigating these challenges can be difficult (Marginson, 2006).

University branch campuses, as a form of TNHE, are no exception. Altbach (2009) argues that university branch campuses are dealing not only with the challenges other HEIs have but also with an additional set of challenges imposed by being away from the home university and, in most cases, operating in a different cultural and societal context. Lane and Kinser (2011) concur and argue that in addition to the challenges of operating in a new context, campus leaders are facing the challenge of navigating local demands and the requirements of the home university.

Although the requirements of the home university, e.g. maintaining quality standards in the branch, might be clear to campus officers, local

demands may not be so clear and may vary according to the context (Shams & Huisman, 2012) especially when the local society is comprised of different groups as in the case of the GCC states. In these states the minority population of citizens receive strong support from their governments and guaranteed employment, whereas the majority expatriate residents who move to these states for a number of years to fill employment gaps in skilled and unskilled areas do not receive the same support (Stasz et al., 2007).

A number of challenges for branch campuses have been identified in the literature. These challenges will be addressed one after the other in this section. The first challenge is the societal view and acceptance of these campuses by families and students, especially as they are campuses of Western universities in conservative Arab countries (Altbach, 2010a; Wang, 2008). The second one is the adoption of the co-educational model of the home universities in conservative societies where single-gender education is the norm (Witte, 2010b; Asquith, 2006). The third challenge is related to the recruitment of qualified local students and their ability to adapt to and succeed in a Western-style educational environment which maintains the quality standards of the home university (Altbach; 2010a; Witte, 2010a). The fourth challenge is teaching curricula developed in a Western society and following standards developed by home Western institutions which sometimes clash with the local culture and values in the host state (Edwards, 2007). Finally, I will discuss how campus senior officers can navigate the goals of the host state and the requirements of the home university (Shams & Huisman, 2012).

3.1. Societal view and acceptance of branch campuses by families and students

Cultural and societal distance between the home university and the branch campus is one of the main challenges that campus senior officers

face (Shams & Huisman, 2012). Western universities which establish campuses in non-Western countries are being accused of imposing their cultural values on students and the society in the host country through their educational systems and not respecting the local culture and norms (Wang, 2008). Ziguras (2008) views this as cultural imperialism or a new way of colonisation which is harmful to the institutions in economic and reputation terms. However, Coffman (2003:18) argues that "… there is no real resistance to this Americanization of higher education" in the GCC region. He adds that "The cultural and religious strictures … do not constitute a major obstacle to the adoption of the American model and the Western notion of secular science" (ibid).

Operating a university campus in a GCC state is a new experience for university managers (Altbach, 2010b) since these states have religious, economic, cultural, political and historic characteristics that are distinguished from other parts of the world. Governments of these states are trying to ensure welfare of all their citizens while building a knowledge economy (Issan, 2013). This brings about tensions as students expect support from their governments without having to obtain high quality education, whereas governments urge students to obtain quality education to build a knowledge economy (Gonzalez, el at, 2008).

Until the beginning of the twentieth century, most GCC states were comprised of tribes that led a Bedouin life and the conservative Arab Islamic culture and tradition were important components of this life (Salem, 1994). The tribal culture in the GCC states features relatively closed societies with strong connections among families within the tribe and resistance to different cultural norms (Alasfoor, 2007). Wang (2008) argues that societies in the Middle East view Western higher education as a threat to culture and religion since Western education brings ideas and cultural norms that clash with the conservative Arab culture such as

challenging assumptions and questioning ideals. This can explain the resistance to this type of education from groups in the GCC societies.

In the meantime, national universities in the GCC States continue to attract large numbers of citizens despite the questionable education quality in these universities for two main reasons. First, they emphasize the national identity, religion and cultural values of the society (Stazs, et al, 2007). This is clear in the visions and mission statements of several national universities in the region (Abouammoh, 2012). Second, they respond to the needs of the society by adopting relaxed student admission and graduation policies. For example, the national university of one the GCC States has recently revised its admissions policy and eliminated the English language requirements for new applicants to be able to admit more citizens (Tok, et al., 2016). This makes it more challenging for branch campuses of Western universities to attract local students.

3.2. Adopting a co-educational model in conservative societies

An important aspect of the conservative culture in the GCC states is gender-segregation that can be seen in educational institutions, hospitals, and some workplaces (Baki, 2004). Schools in the GCC states are gender-segregated (Donn & Al-Manthri, 2010); something that did not change even after some major reforms to the education systems in most of these states took place mainly because of the strong religious and cultural connection with gender (Brewer et al, 2007). National universities also have separate campuses for male and female students but branch campuses of Western universities follow the co-education model of their home universities (Witte, 2010b). Therefore, many students prefer the national universities over the branch campuses even though the campuses are known for their quality education.

Asquith (2006) argues that even students who matriculate at the branch campuses tend to self-segregate in the classroom and often refuse to work together in mixed-gender groups since they are used to the single-gender environment. This represents a challenge for faculty especially that they adopt student-centred teaching methodologies and often use cooperative learning techniques in their classes relying on group work. However, Kane (2013) argues that recently, the situation seems to be changing and more local female students are enrolling in the branch campuses in the GCC region because of their high quality education. Similarly, the number of GCC citizens who send their children to co-educational K-12 international schools has recently increased (Alpen Capital, 2012). This signals a change in the view of GCC citizens towards co-education.

3.3. Recruitment of local students and their ability to adapt to and succeed in a Western-style educational environment

One of the main challenges cited for branch campuses in the GCC region is the lack of qualified high school graduates, especially from the citizens' population, who can meet the high admissions standards of the Western campuses (Altbach, 2010a; Lane and Kinser, 2011). According to Gonzalez et al. (2008) this is due to social factors which have a major impact on student academic achievements in this region. The GCC governments have been using large revenues from oil and gas to provide free services for citizens and guarantee employment for graduates in the government sector regardless of educational attainment (Gonzalez et al., 2008; Stasz et al., 2007). This has resulted in low motivational levels for students and poor academic achievements, especially among male students.

For example, a large number of GCC citizens complete secondary education then opt to enlist in the military or police forces because of the attractive salaries; whereas those who decide to obtain university degrees usually enrol in national universities with admission standards lower than

those of the branch campuses (Stasz et al., 2007). Although the government provides scholarships to the citizens admitted to the branch campuses, many cannot meet the campuses' admission requirements.

Generally local school education systems in the GCC region have not been preparing students for competitive higher education offered by Western branch campuses (Altbach, 2010a). From an academic perspective, graduates of public schools in the region, mostly citizens, lack important English, maths and critical thinking skills necessary for Western-style higher education (Stasz et al., 2007; Altbach, 2010a). Public schools adopt didactic hierarchical teaching methods and use curricula that do not enhance students' critical thinking (Brewer et al, 2007) and do not focus on foreign language learning (Altbach, 2010a).

Although there have been several attempts in most GCC states to enhance the quality of school education, improvements in student achievements have been limited (Gonzalez et al., 2008). This is evidenced by the poor performance of students from the two GCC states, Qatar and the UAE, which participated in the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) conducted by the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). Both countries scored remarkably below the OECD average (OECD, 2014).

This can explain the small pool of qualified candidates that branch campuses compete for in some of the GCC states (Witte, 2010). Low enrolment and the consequent lack of financial viability were the main reasons for the closure of two branch campuses in the region recently (Lane 2010). Both Michigan State University and George Mason University have shut down their campuses in the UAE after failing to recruit enough students to their undergraduate programmes (Lane & Kinser, 2011).

In response to this dilemma, some GCC governments have established post-secondary and pre-university foundation or academic bridge programmes to help raise academic standards of secondary school graduates, especially in English language and mathematics, and prepare them to meet the admissions standards of the branch campuses (Alpen Capital, 2010). However, Altbach (2010a) thinks that these efforts might not make the profound change necessary to provide a large pool of qualified students that ensures the sustainability of the branch campuses, and the realisation of a knowledge economy in the region. This is critical because western universities will not compromise the quality of their programmes offered in their IBCs in order to admit more students.

The increase in the number of K-12 international schools that provide quality education in the region seems to address the needs of the fast growing expatriate communities as opposed to the citizens who are the main target of branch campuses set up in the region (Alpen Capital, 2010). Although the number of citizens enrolled in international K-12 schools in the region has recently increased, it continues to be relatively small (Alpen Capital, 2012) and thus does not provide the critical mass necessary for branch campuses to achieve their enrolment targets (Knight, 2013). Moreover, many of the expatriate students who complete their secondary education in the GCC states go to their home countries for university education whereas only a small number of them can enrol in the branch campuses because of the high tuition fees (Willoughby, 2008).

Students' preparation for college is more than just a good command of English, the language of instruction in most branch campuses (Lane & Kinser, 2011), and proficiency in mathematics; it is also how students think and act. Robinson-Pant (2009) argues that the way students think and act academically in one culture may not be appropriate in another, which presents some challenges for universities. Yang (2006, p.47)

supports this argument by indicating that cultural differences in the techniques students use to learn represents a challenge to the institutions, and states that "It is the Western transnational higher education provider's challenge to adopt the Western genre albeit without imposing cultural and pedagogical imperialism." If campus senior officers and faculty cannot maintain this balance, their campus might lose its worth (Knight, 2012) and might potentially have to cease operations.

Students who enrol in Western branch campuses in the GCC States are a combination of citizens of these states, children of expatriates who reside in these states, in addition to a small number of international students most of whom come from neighbouring countries (Willoughby, 2008). These students come from different backgrounds and school systems. Most citizens of the host states have been educated in government schools that use didactic teaching methods (Brewer et al, 2007) whereas many of the expatriate students have been educated in international schools that adopt constructivist teaching methods that enhance critical thinking skills (ibid). It is sometimes difficult for faculty to engage with and motivate different groups of students who have different learning styles, especially at the beginning of their studies (Edwards, 2007).

Another aspect of the issue of teaching and learning in branch campuses is the difference between students' learning styles and those of their faculty. In a recent study of learning styles of faculty and students in a Western branch campus in a GCC State it was found that faculty from the home Western university tend to have a learning style that relied on abstract conceptualizing and, therefore, preferred theories, logical processing, lectures, and critical awareness. In contrast, students, especially in the beginning of their studies, had a more active experimenting style and, therefore, preferred concrete examples, hands-on

practical learning, and action (Lemke-Westcott & Johnson, 2013). This might affect students' learning and the outcome of their education.

3.4. Teaching the curricula of Western universities to students in a different context

Teaching the curriculum of the home Western university in the branch campus can create tensions. Altbach (2007) clearly warns that if branch campuses do not use the same curricula of their home universities, the quality of their education can be questionable especially as they claim that degrees offered in the branch campuses are the same as those offered in the home university. Knight (2013) concurs by highlighting the importance of maintaining strong links to the home university at both institutional and programme levels. At the programme level the curricula, teaching, and assessment should follow the home university guidelines. At the institutional level, Wood (2011) advocates for replicating the student experience in branch campuses by creating the institutional ethos of the home university in the branch albeit with some adjustments to fit the local context.

Maintaining the quality and standards of the home university represents the interest of the home university. However, students enrolled in the branch campuses might have other interests. Shams and Huisman (2012) indicate that branch campuses can face conflicting interests with some students expecting to be taught the curriculum of the home university by faculty who teach there while others expecting a modified version of the curriculum taught by faculty from the region who understand the students' learning styles and needs. It is challenging for campus senior officers and faculty to navigate these conflicting interests.

The main concern regarding the curriculum is that the materials used to teach the curriculum developed in the home Western university might

clash with cultural norms and values in the host country and require adjustment to fit the local context (Smith, 2009). Wang (2008) explains this by indicating that Western institutions are being accused of not respecting local values of non-Western host countries and of imposing their cultural values through education. More specifically, as Edwards (2007) warns, the American education model is rooted in the values of the society where it was developed, and if it is applied in societies with completely different cultures and values, there are implications. For example, some concepts or materials taught in the curricula might challenge students' basic beliefs. This is at the level of home university versus branch campus.

At another level, there are institutions with several branches in different parts of the world with different local cultures and values. These institutions try to standardize the curriculum across their campuses to maintain the quality and meet the expectations of some students in the branches who want to receive the same education as the home university (McBurnie & Ziguras, 2007). This makes the task of campus senior officers and faculty even more challenging.

Although Altbach (2007) argues strongly for using the same curriculum in both the home university and branch campus in order to provide the same experience to the students and maintain the quality standards, Witte (2010a) indicates that some degree of adaptation to the local environment might contribute to a better learning experience for the students. These tensions put campus managers in a difficult situation: should they standardise with the main campus or adjust to fit the local context? (Shams & Huisman, 2012). According to Witte (2010a), Lane and Kinser (2011) and Knight (2013) campus leaders, faculty and staff should understand the local context and ensure that the education they provide

fits this context without compromising the quality standards of their home universities.

3.5. Navigating the cultural values, norms and expectations in the host country and the requirements of the home university

The GCC States being developing countries with large natural resources plan to invest the revenues from these resources in building a knowledge economy. One manifestation of this is establishing and funding branch campuses of reputable universities locally to ensure sustainability when the natural resources expire (Gonzalez et al., 2008). It is clear in the national vision that the leadership of the host state believe in the importance of moving to a knowledge-based economy as it is more sustainable than a carbon-based one. Gonzalez, et al, (2008) argue that developing human capital will help the GCC States diversify their economies by having skilled workforce in several areas, rely more on national than expatriate labour, and have a stronger private sector. In the meantime, the national vision underscores the importance of human development through education and training (National Vision).

Western universities invited to establish branch campuses in developing countries view these initiatives as opportunities to venture into new markets, improve their reputation and status internationally, generate income, and contribute to the development of host countries (Knight, 2013). However, branch campuses face a number of challenges such as those discussed in this section as a result of operating in a new culture with values and norms that are different from those of the Western culture. This creates fundamental tensions between the aims of host states and those of home universities. Home Western universities have non-negotiable threshold quality standards that they insist on maintaining in the branches, whereas host states aim to establish a knowledge economy that does not threaten the cultural fabric of the

society. So the key challenge for branch campuses is to navigate these tensions (Wang, 2008; Shams & Huisman, 2012).

4. The impact of the local cultural context on branch campuses

The local cultural context has an impact on several aspects of branch campuses such as teaching and learning, student activities, co-curricular experiences, institutional ethos, residence halls, campus facilities and even procurement and contracting processes (Lane, 2011b). However, the impact on teaching and learning is the most profound as it directly affects the educational outcomes of students (Dunn and Wallace, 2006).

Dunn and Wallace (2004, 2006) argue that it is challenging for faculty members from the home university to teach students in the branch campus who have different learning styles and cultural norms. For example, Western-style education adopts a constructivist approach to learning whereby learners are actively involved in the process of knowledge construction (Baviskar, 2009) whereas didactic education to which GCC students are used is characterised by passive memorization of knowledge (Shulman, 1987). Healey (2016) concurs and argues that it is inappropriate for social and cultural reasons to impose the pedagogical approach of the home university on students who live in a different cultural context. In the meantime, faculty members from home Western universities might not be aware of culturally competent strategies in teaching, and thus might lack the ability to communicate and work with learners from other cultures successfully (Paige & Goode, 2009).

In his study of branch campuses in a GCC state, Rostron (2009) argues that there is tension between the liberal arts perspective of education in Western branch campuses and the expectations of the local society for these campuses. More specifically, liberal arts encourage questioning assumption and challenging ideals, whereas conservative societies highly

regard acquiescence (ibid). This suggests that students might have difficulties with Western-style education that is characterised by critical thinking and active learning.

5. How branch campus senior officers deal with the challenges they face

University branch campuses operate in local environments which are often different from the home university environments (Debowski, 2005). Practices that are successful in home universities are not always successful in the branches given the different local environment (Lane, 2011b). Branch campus senior officers are expected to maintain their home university quality standards in the branch (Chalmers, 2011) since home universities are usually invited to establish campuses because of their reputation for providing quality higher education (Altbach, 2010a). However, campus officers might need to adjust aspects of the programmes and operations to fit the local context (Shams & Huisman, 2012) and support host states in achieving their goals (Banks & McBurnie, 1999).

Murphy (2002) argues that university leaders should deal with situations according to the circumstances but Melville-Ross (2010) thinks it is important for university leaders to strike a balance between taking short-term action to deal with current situations and maintaining a longer-term perspective that enables them to invest in sustained success. In any case, it is important for HEI leaders to be aware of the unique factors that characterize their campus environment in order to take the best course of action to deal with the challenges they face (Smith & Hughey, 2006).

5.1. Dealing with challenges related to the societal view of the campuses

Redden (2014), Knight (2013) and Lane (2010a) all argue that campus leaders and faculty should interact and integrate with the local society to

avoid alienation and enhance their role and image in the society. Branch campuses should consider some trust-building activities to improve their image in the local society (Bhanji, 2008). Witte (2010a) explains a few examples of such institutional activities. In one GCC state branch campuses started local outreach efforts to enhance their image in the society by hosting events on and off campus and inviting prospective students, their parents and relevant stakeholders. In another state, a campus integrated into the society by starting a public lecture series a year before it was inaugurated. However, Altbach (2011) and Lane and Kinser (2011) argue that branch campus engagement with the local context might happen at the expense of maintaining the home university standards and quality.

Dunn and Wallace (2006), Ziguras (2008), and Cai and Hall (2016) all call for the provision of proper induction to faculty and staff before they join university branch campuses. For example, the Australian Vice Chancellors Committee requires that Australian universities provide training programmes in cross-cultural interaction for academics before they teach off-shore (Yang, 2006). This should ease the transition and enable faculty and staff to understand the difficulties and challenges of working in a different cultural context.

5.2. Dealing with challenges related to mixed-gender education

Adopting a co-educational model in conservative societies presents challenges to branch campuses (Witte, 2010b). For example, in conservative societies some students enrolled in Western branch campuses tend to self-segregate in the classroom and often refuse to work together in mixed-gender groups because they are used to the single-gender environment of their K-12 schools (Asquith, 2006). Therefore, campus managers and staff should understand the local culture to avoid potential clashes with cultural norms. The provision of proper induction to

faculty and staff called for by Dunn and Wallace (2006), Ziguras (2008), and Cai and Hall (2016) can help address concerns related to co-education, especially if the faculty and staff do not have prior experience in working with students who are used to the gender-segregated environment such as in the GCC region.

Wood (2011) provides an example of accommodating the local culture in her branch campus. Although campus staff replicated several traditions of the home university in the branch, they altered some traditions that clashed with the local culture in the host country. For example, a three-day off-campus orientation programme for new students typically held in the home university in mixed-gender groups was done on-campus in the branch given the inappropriateness of having mixed-gender events off-campus in the host country.

5.3. Dealing with challenges related to recruitment of qualified students and their ability to succeed in a Western-style educational environment while maintaining the quality of the home university

Student recruitment and admission are important aspects of operating a university branch campus. It is necessary for the success and sustainability of a branch campus to be able to recruit and admit enough qualified students to its programmes (Altbach, 2007). The main challenge related to student recruitment for university branch campuses in the GCC region is the lack of qualified secondary school graduates locally (Altbach, 2007; Gonzalez et al., 2008). This has resulted in the closure of two branch campuses in one of the GCC states in 2008 and 2009.

Many home universities do not allow staff in their campuses to adapt their student recruitment and admission policies and procedures to fit the local conditions and fear that this adaptation might affect the quality and

reputation of the home university (Lane, 2011b). For example, one university decided to manage the admissions process of its branch campus centrally to ensure the student quality. This made it difficult for the campus staff to adapt the process to the local conditions, and students have felt frustrated (ibid).

There are several ways for recruiting students to universities discussed in the literature. Visits to high schools by admissions staff have been identified by Hossler, et al. (1990) as a useful method to recruit students. School counsellors play an important role in directing students towards the university and the major that best suits them (Edmunds, 1980). Therefore, university admission staff are encouraged to visit local schools and work with secondary school counsellors and update them on application requirements and key dates.

Impey and Underhill (1994) argue that exhibitions, education tours and seminars are effective student recruitment tools. However, Phillips and Rasberry (1986) highlight the importance of word of mouth in recruiting students as one of the most effective recruitment tools for educational institutions. Word of mouth student recruitment can be most effective by engaging the institution's current students and alumni in the recruitment efforts which has a direct impact on prospective students' decisions (Stanford University, 1994). University officials should identify the most effective tools for student recruitment according to their local environment (Impey & Underhill, 1994)

To address the challenge of not having enough qualified students locally several branch campuses started pre-university programmes and other similar efforts to provide academic preparation to students who did not meet the entry requirements of the campuses although participation in these programmes does not guarantee entry to the campuses (lane, 2011b). According to Stasz et al. (2007) these programmes are necessary

to provide a pipeline of local students who can meet the admission requirements of the branch campuses or other HEIs since branch campuses would not compromise their education quality.

5.4. Dealing with challenges related to teaching home university curricula in branch campuses

HEIs in general should constantly develop or revise curricula to respond to the market requirements (Nawe, 2001) but branch campuses should provide education that addresses the needs and aspirations of their home universities as well as those of the local communities and national contexts (Rumbley et al., 2012). One way of addressing the needs of the local community is by establishing partnerships with the local industry, private sector and government organizations in the host state (Melville-Ross, 2010, Witte, 2010) so that campus managers and faculty understand and address the needs of these organizations.

Although Edwards (2007) and Wang (2008) argue that home university curricula should be revised to fit the local context of the branch, Altbach (2007) strongly advises against this if the universities are to keep their quality standards and provide the students in the branch campus with the same experience as those in the home university. However, challenges related to the curricula can be overcome by enabling faculty members to more effectively teach these curricula (Dunn and Wallace, 2006). Faculty members play a vital role in facilitating student learning and if they are not well-prepared to teach in a new setting, the students will not benefit from their education (Gopal, 2011). Therefore, Dunn and Wallace (2006) urge home universities to provide sufficient preparation for faculty members before they teach in branch campuses. This preparation should focus on culturally competent pedagogical strategies, alternative teaching methods, communication with students from other cultures, and responding in culturally sensitive ways (Paige & Goode, 2009).

5.5. Navigating the goals of the host state and those of the home university

In branch campus development Witte (2010a) and Lane (2010) argue that host countries expect branch campuses to support their development efforts and contribute to achieving their development goals. This is the case in most branch campus agreements but more importantly in agreements where the host country provides financial support to the campuses (Altbach, 2010). McBurnie (2002) concurs and argues that although branch campuses are viewed as part of the privatization of higher education by their home universities, many of them play important roles in achieving the missions of their host countries such as providing quality higher education locally and building a knowledge economy (Lane & Kinser, 2011). However, branch campuses are strongly connected to their home universities and, therefore, are expected to act as units of the home university abroad and contribute to achieving its mission and goals (Robson, 2011). Navigating the goals of both the host state and the home university is challenging for campus officers and requires adopting a balanced approach to achieving the different goals of the host country and home university (Shams & Huisman, 2012).

This can be achieved through establishing partnerships with organizations and government entities in the host state so that campus senior officers and faculty understand the plans of these organizations and support their needs (Melville-Ross, 2010, Witte, 2010). Lane (2011) opines that campus managers and staff should adapt policies and practices, whenever possible, to meet the demands of the campus environment albeit without affecting the quality of their programmes which is why they are invited in the first place.

6. Summary

In this chapter I presented a review of the literature related to challenges in university branch campuses. The review focused on the main challenges identified in the literature such as the societal view of the campuses, the adoption of the co-educational model of the home university in the branch, the difficulty of recruiting qualified local students and their abilities to succeed in a Western-style educational environment, the teaching of home university curricula in the branch, and the navigation of host country objectives and home university requirements. The review also covered the impact of the local cultural context on the branch campuses and how senior officers deal with the aforementioned challenges.

Senior officers of university branch campuses need to understand the local context and host country goals and plans in order to support the host country meet its objectives without disrupting the fabric of the society. In the meantime, campus senior officers need to maintain the quality standards and meet the requirements of their home universities so they can achieve the home university objectives of the branch campus venture.

Chapter Three-Methodology

The purpose of this chapter is to explain the methodological underpinnings and framework of the study and provide an account of the various steps followed and decisions made with regards to the study design and methods. The chapter starts with a brief introduction and presentation of the research questions. In section two I explain the researcher's view and discuss epistemological underpinnings of the study. In section three I discuss the research design and present a justification for selecting the paradigm, method and strategy adopted in this study. The following two sections provide an account of the various steps followed for data collection (section four) and data analysis (section five). Section six provides a brief account of the pilot study conducted in preparation for the full research study. In section seven I discuss trustworthiness of the research and issues of power, and in the final section I discuss the relevant ethical issues. The chapter ends with a brief summary.

1.   Introduction

Branch campus senior officers face a number of challenges related to the context where their campuses are. Among these are: 1) the societal view of the branch campuses; 2) the adoption of a co-educational model; 3) the recruitment of local highly qualified students and their ability to adapt to Western-style education; 4) the appropriateness of the curriculum to the local context; and 5) navigating the objectives of the host country and the requirements of the home university. Branch campus officers attempt to respond to these challenges in different ways while maintaining their home university standards. This study is an attempt to explore the challenges perceived by senior officers of five Western university branch campuses in a GCC state and how they deal with these challenges.

The main research question for the study is:

What are the challenges perceived by senior officers of five university branch campuses in a GCC state and what they do to deal with these challenges?

I attempted to answer this question through the following sub-questions:

A.   What are the challenges perceived by senior officers of five branch campuses in a GCC nation state?

B.   To what extent are these challenges a result of operating in a different cultural context?

C.   What are campus senior officers doing to deal with these challenges?

D.   How findings of this study can be theorised to inform future policy and practice?

2.   Researcher's world view

It is important for researchers to determine their view of the world as this helps them understand the logic behind the research approaches that they and others take (Grix, 2002). When thinking about one's view of the world, the terms 'ontology', 'epistemology' and 'methodology' need to be clarified (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Grix (2002) argues that all research starts with ontology, then the researcher's epistemological and methodological positions follow. Guba and Lincoln (1994) followed the same order when they compared four of the competing paradigms in qualitative research. Therefore, I will discuss ontology, epistemology and methodology in this order.

Ontology is concerned with the nature of the world (Willig, 2001) and is defined as 'reality' or 'what exists' (Gruber, 1992). Willig thinks that "ontological concerns are fundamental" (2001, p.13) and argues that it is impossible not to have some assumptions about the world. Campbell and Wasco (2000) clarify this by arguing that researchers' primary ontological decision point is to clarify whether they accept or reject the existence of a single understanding of reality.

Epistemology is defined as 'how we come to know' (Trochim, 2006). Questions such as 'what constitutes reality?' (Mathison, 2005); 'how do we know that what we perceive is real?' (Pajares, 1992); and 'how, and what, can we know?' (Willig, 2001; Grix, 2002) are central questions in epistemology. Blaikie captures these questions succinctly by stating that "epistemology is concerned with claims about how what is assumed to exist can be known" (2000 in Grix, 2002, p.177). Thus, Blaikie highlights the following elements of epistemology: epistemological positions are claims; these claims are regarding what we think exists; and how can we know what exists?

My position as I conduct this research study is that there are multiple understandings of reality as reality is socially constructed by people through their experiences, views and feelings (Gray, 2009). Thus there are multiple understandings of the reality that are shaped by the people who construct them (Creswell, 2009a). Additionally, the way we understand this reality is shaped by our experiences, views and feelings and, therefore, it is important for researchers to acknowledge any potential biases they might have about the subject of their research if they recognize them (Gray, 2009).

Methodology focuses on the logic of scientific inquiry (Morrison, 2002). It is important for researchers to figure out how a particular worldview affects the whole research process by "understanding the interrelationship

between the researcher and reality; linking it to what can be known about this reality (their epistemological position) and how to go about acquiring it (their methodological approach)" (Grix, 2002, p.34).

Morrison (2002) highlights the relationship between the researchers' world view and the methodology by stating that "ontology and epistemology affect the methodology that underpins the researchers' work" (p11). Willig (2001) concurs by arguing that the epistemological position adopted by the researcher informs the methodology selected to study a topic. She argues that we can identify the epistemological roots of a methodology by thinking about the kind of knowledge the researcher aims to produce by adopting the methodology; the kind of assumptions the researcher makes about the world; and how the researcher's role is conceptualized in the research process. In the next section I address these three topics by explaining the design of the research study.

3.   Research design

This section discusses the study's research paradigm, method and strategy.

3.1. Research paradigm

A research paradigm is defined in a number of ways: Guba and Lincoln (1994) view it as the "basic belief system or world view that guides the investigation" (p105) whereas Bassey (1999) defines it as "a network of coherent ideas about the nature of the world and the functions of researchers which ...... conditions the patterns of their thinking and underpins their research actions." (p42). Bogdan and Biklen (1998) provide a similar view by stating that a paradigm is a "loose collection of logically held together assumptions, concepts or propositions that orient thinking and research" (p22). These definitions highlight the notion that paradigms are researchers' views of the world and that they guide or

underpin research. Thus, a link between paradigms and epistemology can be established.

Guba and Lincoln (1994) explain this link by arguing that the research paradigm can summarise how we interpret the world and the relationship between the researcher and the known (epistemology); how we perceive reality (ontology); and how we can attain knowledge in a systematic way (methodology). However, Crotty (1998) thinks that the epistemology, paradigm and methodology inform each other in research. Both arguments highlight a relationship between paradigms and epistemology but at different levels.

There are two main paradigms in modern educational research: positivism and interpretivism (Pajares, 1992). Positivism is defined as an epistemology "which seeks to explain and predict what happens in the social world by searching for regularities and causal relationships between its constituent elements." (Burrell & Morgan, 1979, p.31), and as an epistemological position which suggests that there is a straight forward relationship between the world and our perception and understanding of it (Willig, 2001). Both definitions highlight the relationship between what happens in the world and how we understand it which, according to Wright (1971), is one of the main tenets of positivism.

Positivism reflects a cause-effect philosophy (i.e. causes probably determine effects) (Creswell, 2003). Hence, positivists start with a hypothesis and aim to test a theory or describe an experience in order to predict and perhaps also control forces that surround us (O'Leary, 2004). Therefore, positivism is believed to predominate in natural sciences (Healy & Perry, 2000) though Mertens (2005) argues that it may also be applied to the study of social phenomena.

Interpretivism focuses on understanding human experience and, thus, is concerned with interpretation of peoples' actions, feelings and intentions (Cohen & Manion, 1994). It suggests that reality is constructed by peoples' views, which may differ from one person to another (Mertens, 2005). In interpretivism, the researcher relies on the views of the participants about the situation being studied and tries to recognize the impact of their own background and experiences on the research (Creswell, 2003). Interpretivists do not begin their research with a theory; instead they generate one throughout the research process based on their analysis of the data they collect (ibid).

Since this study aims to explore the challenges perceived by senior officers of branch campuses in a different cultural context and ways of dealing with these challenges, it is important to understand these challenges through the views of the people involved (Silverman, 2005). The interpretive paradigm provides the appropriate frame for understanding phenomena (Creswell, 2003). Given the exploratory aim of this study, I have not started the investigation with a certain theory to test it as in positivism. Instead, I have tried to explore the phenomenon and understand its elements in order to build a theory that might illuminate this phenomenon (Cohen & Manion, 1994; Mertens, 2005) which is one of the main tenets of the interpretive paradigm (Creswell, 2003). Therefore, the study was conducted within the parameters of the interpretive paradigm.

The interpretive paradigm is rooted in the epistemological belief that people construct social reality and that reality is constructed differently by different people (Gall et al, 1996). That is, there is more than one understanding of reality and it is the subjective experience of the individual that is important since it is the individual perception that gives meanings to things. Since this study investigates topics that can be

understood through the experiences of individuals, it locates itself within the parameters of the interpretive paradigm.

3.2. Research method

The method selected for a research study should be guided mainly by the objectives of the study (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2005) though the research paradigm will influence the choice of method. Quantitative and qualitative research methods have been debated for half a century (Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006). **Quantitative** research aims at understanding phenomena by establishing relationships between their various elements (ibid). Willig (2001) indicates that in quantitative research, researchers usually start with specific hypotheses they wish to test, and their emphasis is placed on developing observations using structured research instruments with the aim of presenting results, usually in the form of cause-effect relationships, which allow inferences to broader populations.

On the other hand, **qualitative** research approaches social phenomena with the aim of understanding and exploring them through the subjective level of human experience (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998). Willig (2001) explains this by arguing that qualitative researchers are concerned with understanding meaning and how people experience events and manage situations through the collection and analysis of qualitative data. Therefore, they focus on the meanings that research participants themselves attribute to events which makes these meanings subjective. I have adopted the qualitative method for this study and discuss the reasons for this choice in the following paragraphs.

Researchers with an interpretive epistemological outlook usually adopt a qualitative method in their research (Pajares, 1992; Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006) and are most likely to work with qualitative data as they are trying to understand phenomena (Creswell, 2003). The objective of this research

study is inherently an issue of views which Willig (2001) considers one of the main concerns of qualitative researchers. She adds that qualitative researchers are interested in how people experience events and how they manage certain situations. This is in line with what this study is trying to accomplish, i.e. understanding the challenges perceived by branch campus senior officers and how they deal with these challenges. Qualitative researchers study people in their own territory, within natural settings (such as home, school, etc.) and analyse data to find themes and patterns and reach an interpretation of the phenomenon (Gall et al, 1996). All these elements are applicable to this study.

Moreover, qualitative research is appropriate for studying phenomena that require in-depth understanding of views and feelings of a small number of people and will not necessarily generalize the findings to larger populations since people's views and feelings are affected by factors such as the context (Hoepfl, 1997). This study lends itself to the qualitative research methods since the aim is to understand the challenges associated with the branch campus phenomenon through the experiences and views of campus senior officers which are expressed qualitatively (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998). Pring (2000) argues that qualitative data are useful for understanding peoples' intentions and motives for actions since they provide rich insight into peoples' behaviour. Qualitative data enabled me to identify patterns and themes that facilitated understanding of the phenomenon (Denscombe, 2007).

3.3. Sampling

I have followed a purposive sampling approach (Denscombe, 2007) for selecting both the case branches and the participants. Since the main aim of the study is to understand the perceived challenges in some branch campuses in a nation state and not generalise to a larger population, purposive sampling was deemed appropriate (Barbour, 2001). Purposive

sampling allows the researcher to focus on the participants who are believed to be critical for the research (Denscombe, 2007) and can select "information rich" individuals or organizations that "provide the greatest insight into the research question" (Devers & Fankel, 2000, p264).

The nation state where this study was conducted hosts a number of Western branch campuses by one host organization. Branch campuses that offer undergraduate programmes within the host organization were approached. Five campuses agreed to participate in the study in addition to the host organization whose officials expressed interest in the study. There are a number of similarities among the participating campuses. First, they are all branches of American universities. Second, all the campuses have been operating in the state for at least six years at the time of data collection which means that none of them is in the start-up phase which, according to Lane (2011), is characterised by certain challenges that might not persist as institutions grow. Third, all case campuses offer undergraduate programmes linked to the state's development goals though some have recently added postgraduate programmes as well. Finally, they all have the same type of agreement with the host organization.

On the other hand, there are some differences among the participating branch campuses. First, some of them are branches of state universities in the US while others are branches of private universities in the US. This is expected to enrich the study and provide views from two different types of HEIs. This might also have a bearing on the campuses' legal statuses and the laws that govern their operations. For example, the procurement laws and regulations of the home universities of some campuses can be similar or different from the laws and regulations applied in the host state. It might also have a bearing on the extent to which branch campuses can adjust to fit the local context since some aspects of the education or

operations of the state universities in the US are required by state legislatures to be replicated at the branch overseas. For example, one of the branches of a state university in the US is obliged to teach the history of the state to students in the branch campus thousands of miles away. This is not the case in branches of private US universities.

Second, although none of them is in the start-up phase, they are at different levels of maturity since they range between six and 15 years of existence in the host state at the time of conducting this study. This is expected to enhance understanding of the various challenges they perceive. Finally, each branch campus offers one or more programmes that the other campuses do not offer. This is meant by the host organization to ensure there is diversity in programme offerings and there is no competition among the campuses it hosts.

The purposive sampling approach was also adopted with regards to the participants. Since the study aims at understanding the challenges in the case campuses, senior officers with the title Dean, Associate Dean and Assistant Dean and similar senior management individuals in each of the five campuses (a total of 35 officials) were approached and 21 responded positively and participated in the study. Since senior leaders are aware of all challenges in their institutions, it was deemed appropriate to only include individuals at this level. Department Heads or Office Directors were not included as they usually face and deal with challenges in their respective departments or offices only.

The participants included senior officers in charge of academic, student, research and operational affairs who usually form the senior management team of a university. In addition to senior officers of branch campuses, seven senior officials from the host organization whose work is directly related to the branch campuses were approached and four participated in the study. Table 3.1 below provides some information about the

participants from the five case campuses and table 3.2 provides information about the participants from the host organization. Participating campuses and individuals have all been given pseudonyms to ensure anonymity and protection of their identities.

Table 3.1: **Participants from branch campuses**

Branch campus (years in host state) [Home Univ.]	Programme offered	Participant [Gender]	Cultural Back-ground	Position (in branch campus)	Years in branch campus
Cloud University (9) [Private]	Business, Computer Science, Information Systems	Magdy [M]	AELW	Associate Dean	6
		Gameela [F]	AELW	Assistant Dean	8
		Rami [M]	WE	Associate Dean	6
Night University (6) [Private]	Communication, Journalism	Darwish [M]	WE	Chief Op. Officer	5
		Refaat [M]	WE	S. Associate Dean	5
		Eman [F]	WE	Dean and CEO	3
		Soha [F]	WE	Associate Dean	4
Tornado University (10) [State]	Engineering	Mansour [M]	WE	Dean and CEO	6
		Hani [M]	WE	Associate Dean	3
		Coheir [F]	WE	Assistant Dean	7
		Jawaher [F]	WE	Chief Op. Officer	4
		Talal [M]	WE	Assistant Dean	7
Volcano University (13) [State]	Design Arts	Ameera [F]	WE	Dean	7
		Ghalib [M]	WE	Associate Dean	I
		Jasim [M]	WE	Associate Dean	2
		Basem [M]	WE	Associate Dean	3.5
		Verna [F]	WE	Assistant Dean	10
Wind	Medicine	Tahani [F]	AELW	Associate Dean	4

University (11) [Private]		Bairam [M]	AELW	Associate Dean	6
		Mohamed [M]	WE	Associate Dean	11
		Jomaa [M]	WE	Dean	4

Gender:	M= Male
	F=Female
Cultural Background:	WE= Western expatriate
	AE= Arab expatriate
	AELTR= Arab expatriate, long-term resident of state
	AELW= Arab Expatriate who has lived in the West

It is important to explain the cultural background of the participants which might have a bearing on their views regarding some of the topics addressed in this research. Fifteen participants from the branch campuses are Westerners and six are originally from the Middle East region, but not from GCC states, who have spent most of their lives in the United States or other Western countries (Table 3.1.) Three out of the four participants from the host organization are from the host state including two citizens and one expatriate who has lived all her life in the state. Only one participant from the host organization is a Western expatriate who moved to the state to join the senior team of the host organization (Table 3.2.)

Table 3.2: **Participants from the host organization**

Participant (pseudonyms)	Gender	Position	Years in host organization
Diab	Male	Associate Vice President	5
Saeed (citizen)	Male	Project Manager	5
Asma	Female	Senior Specialist	9
Kamal (citizen)	Male	Vice President	1

The number of years participants have spent in the branch campuses and the host organization varies from one to eleven years. This should be taken into consideration when understanding the participants' responses regarding the societal views of the campuses and cultural issues. Those who have spent a long time in the host state might have had more opportunities to interact with members of the society and understand their cultural background. Participants who have recently moved to the host state might still be figuring out how people think about and view the campuses in this society.

The management structures of these campuses are similar in terms of organization. All campuses have flat structures with a relatively large number of Associate/Assistant Deans and other senior officials reporting to the Deans. These numbers vary according to the size of the campus, the number of programmes offered, the number of research projects undertaken, the external relations locally and regionally, and the magnitude of operations in the campus. For example, one campus has an

associate dean for research and another one for postgraduate studies, whereas another campus has one associate dean for academic affairs responsible for teaching and research.

The size of the student body at each campus does not seem to affect the management structure. It is the aspects of the programmes offered and the relevant academic and operational functions that seem to have an impact on the management structure. For example, Wind University campus that offers a medical programme has a relatively small number of students but the largest management structure with over 15 senior officers. Similarly, the type of institution (private or state) of the home university in the US does not seem to affect the management structure size. Volcano University campus has a relatively small management structure compared to Tornado University campus though both are campuses of state universities in the US.

The campuses started small and have grown over time. Some have started with a Dean, an Associate Dean and a Chief Operations Officer such as Night University Campus. Over five years, the senior management structure has grown to seven members including an additional Associate Dean and a Director for each programme offered. Also the operations management structure has grown from one senior member when the campus was first established to six members five years later. This reflects the growth of the branch campuses over time in the host state.

Campus senior officers interact with the officials of the host organization which also has a flat organizational structure comprised of a President, and four Vice- and Associate Vice-Presidents. A joint advisory board governs each branch campus. These boards are comprised of representatives from the home university in the US, the host organization, the host state (outside of the host organization, e.g. government or industry senior officials), and independent members. Board meetings are

held annually and members discuss a variety of issues spanning student enrolment, infrastructure, and academic programmes of each campus.

The Vice President and the Associate Vice President are two senior members in the host organization and handle student and campus affairs. Although the Vice President had been in this post for only a year at the time of interview, he had previously served as an Assistant Professor and a Director of the Student Counselling Centre at the national university in the host state for six years. Both participants work with the campuses on areas related to student recruitment, financial support, student housing and recreational facilities, and student and faculty activities involving all campuses.

The Senior Specialist is the longest serving participant in the host organization. She is familiar with many areas related to the work of the campuses and has been involved in planning and implementation of several projects and programmes related to student recruitment, testing, student activities, branch campus agreements, and relationships with the campuses and the community. She reports to the Associate Vice President. The Project Manager is a senior management member and has been involved in a variety of projects in areas related to facilities, human resources, finances, and relationships with the branch campuses. He reports to the President of the host organization. All four participants work closely with the branch campuses.

3.4. Case study strategy

A case study has been defined as an inquiry strategy (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005), a methodology (Merriam, 1998), or a comprehensive research strategy (Yin, 2003). Although Cohen et al (2000) think that case study is a well-established research strategy; Yin (2009) indicates that some consider the case study as the exploratory stage of some other type of

research and, according to Tellis (1997) some criticise case studies for their dependence on single cases which makes them incapable of providing generalizable findings.

However, others counter these arguments by indicating that case studies provide a deep understanding of phenomena (Denscombe, 2007) and study the particularity of a single case or multiple cases (Stake, 1995) and, as such, provide understandings of complex issues and can add strength to existing knowledge about the issues they cover (Soy, 1997). Another criticism for case studies is the view that the intense exposure to the cases during the study biases the findings but Tellis (1997) and Soy (1997) argue that case study research has been used for a long time and in a variety of disciplines, and has produced reports that enriched understanding of phenomena and contributed to knowledge in their fields.

I have adopted the case study strategy for this research since the main objective of this study is to identify the perceived challenges of leading university branch campuses in a nation state. Hence, the study does not aim for findings that can be generalised beyond the boundaries of this state. However, the findings of this study can be generalised, to some extent, to other similar contexts (i.e. other GCC states) with caution since there are variations from one state to another despite the similarities.

It is important to note that case study is the preferred strategy when 'how' or 'why' questions are being posed since it is concerned with understanding and describing a case or a phenomenon (Yin, 2009). Examples of these cases are government studies that are conducted to determine the efficiency of specific programmes, including education initiatives, and the extent to which the goals of these programs have been achieved (Tellis, 1997). There are two types of case studies according to the type of research question they address: 1) exploratory case studies are used to answer the 'how' question and explain phenomena; and 2)

explanatory case studies are used to answer the 'why' question and explain reasons for phenomena (Stake, 1995; Soy, 1997; Yin, 2003). This study aims to explore the challenges branch campus senior officers perceive and how they deal with these challenges. This aim makes this research an exploratory case study.

There are a number of characteristics of case study research. Yin (2009) views a case study technically as "an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident" (p18). In this view, Yin identified three characteristics of case studies: 1) investigation of a contemporary phenomenon; 2) in depth; and 3) within its real-life context. Bassey (1999), Bell (2005) and Denscombe (2007) all identified these same characteristics of case studies but Bassey (1999) adds an element of time by indicating that the phenomenon is studied at a certain point in time.

The study aims to investigate perceived challenges in branch campuses (a contemporary phenomenon) in a nation state (real life context) in a number of educational institutions (multiple bounded systems-multiple case study) at a certain point in time (Bassey, 1999) and to represent them in their own terms (Yin, 2009). These aspects of the study are elements of case study research. These characteristics have been viewed by critics of case study research as weaknesses. Flyvbjerg (2006) discusses these aspects in his article entitled "Five Misunderstandings about Case Study Research" and argues that some scholars who viewed case study research as incapable of contributing to knowledge such as Campbell and Stanley (1966) and Eysenck (1976) have later altered their views and became strong supporters of case study research.

Case studies can focus on a single case (a bounded system, i.e., a setting or a context) or multiple cases (multiple bounded systems; Creswell et al,

2007). A single case provides an opportunity for thick, detailed description and understanding of the case while multiple cases allow for comparisons among the various cases which can enrich the research (Yin, 2003). This study involves five branch campuses and the multiple case study strategy allowed for comparisons among the cases.

Another characteristic of case study research is that data collection usually involves multiple sources of information such as interviews, observations, and documents (Creswell et al, 2007; Bassey, 1999) which can enrich understanding of the cases(s) and allow for comparison and triangulation of data. This is achieved in this study as both interviews and document reviews have been conducted and themes and topics examined from more than one source. Although triangulation enhances the rigor of the study, it requires more time and effort on the part of the researcher. It also requires careful presentation of data and the analysis so that readers can see the link between the data examined and the findings reached.

Researchers prefer the case study strategy when they want to cover contextual conditions which they believe are relevant to the phenomenon (Yin, 2009). According to Hammersley et al., (2000) these contextual conditions are important for understanding the phenomenon in question but Gall et al (1996) argue that this makes any case unique and limits the generalizability of the findings. Therefore, researchers will need to be aware that when adopting the case study strategy, they will be paying more attention to the case and its various aspects and details than to potential for their research findings to be generalised. I have considered this view when designing this multiple case study. The case study strategy has enabled me to focus on the relevant issues that are unique to the context of the nation state and branch campuses and presented them as viewed by the individuals who are directly involved in or are dealing with them (i.e. branch campus senior officers and host country officials). The

context is very important in this study as it contributes to understanding the perceived challenges in question and how campus senior officers deal with them.

4.   Data collection

Case studies generally aim for a high level of detail that enables deep understanding of the phenomenon in question (Soy, 1997). This level of detail can be obtained through in-depth interviews which can be useful for collecting qualitative data needed for this kind of inquiry (Denscombe, 2007). Yin (2003) recommends interviews and documents among six types of information sources for case study research. Interviews are suitable for gaining insights into people's opinions and experiences (Denscombe, 2007) and help researchers understand the meaning people make of their experience (Seidman, 2006). Therefore, I used in-depth qualitative semi-structured interviews to elicit participants' views and experiences related to the research questions.

4.1. Semi-structured interviews

Semi-structured interviews provide a frame for the questions to be asked that is useful for comparing responses across participants but, at the same time, provide flexibility in following up on questions and asking for details (Bell, 2005). However, the flexibility offered by semi-structured interviews can make the comparison of responses across participants difficult and, thus, negatively affect the interpretation of these responses and the drawing of conclusions.

There are a number of challenges to using interviews. For example, participants might feel some pressure during interviews when discussing failures or challenges related to their work (Wragg, 2002) and, consequently, do not provide the level of detail needed by the researcher. Also, many people prefer to exaggerate their successes and deny their

failures (Taylor & Bogdan 1998) which might be the case when campus officers talk about how they address some of the challenges they face. This can misguide the researcher and provide a rather false image of failures and successes. Finally, participants from different cultural backgrounds might see things differently. For example, branch campus participants who are from the US might view things differently from those of the host organization who are citizens of the host state.

These challenges were addressed during the interviews with the participants by using prompts and probes to encourage the participants to elaborate on their responses, and later during the analysis by comparing and contrasting responses of participants from the same campus and comparing the participants' responses with information collected from the documents. Prompts and probes were used consistently among participants whenever possible but were sometimes unnecessary as some participants provided details and examples related to their responses.

Interviews with campus senior officers and host organization officials were held between December 2012 and June 2013. All potential participants were approached by email and a description of the study was provided. For those who agreed to participate, a consent form was sent by email and participants asked to sign and return it electronically or keep it for collection at the time of interview. The invitation letter and consent form used are in appendices B and C respectively.

Interviews ranged between 30-60 minutes in length depending on the availability of the respondents, the depth of some of the responses, and the experience of the participants. Interviews were conducted in English. The participants who are non-native speakers of English were offered the opportunity to be interviewed in Arabic but they all preferred English. Interviews were guided by the research questions that were formed based on the literature review (see interview schedule in appendix A). The same

interview schedule was used for all participants. Notes about the researcher's role in the interview, how the interview developed, and concerns of the participants were handwritten in the research log. Interviews were audio recorded in full and then transcribed to facilitate the coding process (Bell, 2005, see section five for a discussion of data analysis). Transcripts were reviewed and sent to participants to validate and provide comments or edits if any (Denscombe, 2007, see discussion of trustworthiness in section 7 below).

The participants' responses highlighted a number of challenges they are facing and issues that officials of the host organization view as challenges for campus senior officers. The main topics that were identified from interviews with the participants were related to the society's view of the campuses, the adoption of the co-education model, recruitment of qualified local students, teaching the curricula of the home universities to students from a different cultural background, and the navigation of the aims of the host state and home universities. The presentation of these views will be structured around themes that were identified from the data.

4.2. Document Review

To enhance my understanding of the perceived challenges in university branch campuses, I have reviewed the latest annual reports of the participating campuses in addition to other relevant documents such as the strategic plans of some campuses that were available on their websites. Reviewing these documents has aided my understanding of the research topics and enabled me to compare information gathered through interviews with information from annual reports. According to Yin (2003) a document review is useful to identify issues within each case which might aid in looking for common themes that transcend the cases. Besides being useful for triangulation, documentary evidence is not impacted by the

researcher's effect since documents are stable, and thus, are reliable sources of data (Guba & Lincoln, 1989).

Documentary evidence is usually used to supplement and verify data gathered from other sources (Bell, 2005; Denscombe, 2007). However, it is important to recognize that documents may be incomplete, inaccurate, or presenting only positive aspects of a phenomenon (Patton, 2002). Creswell (2009b) explains this by arguing that documents are produced by people and therefore are based on the writers' ideas and theories, and are always located within particular conditions and structures. Therefore, Creswell thinks that understanding the social context of documents affects their interpretation.

Documents reviewed included information about student numbers, course offerings, graduates, community engagement, and objectives which are relevant to the study. When reviewing the documents, I have looked for sections that might be related to the categories that have emerged from the analysis of interview transcripts, especially with regards to how campus senior officers address the challenges they face. Then I have conducted a second round of reading in which I have focused on comparing the categories and subcategories that emerged from the interview transcript analysis with relevant materials from the documents (Yin, 2009). I have realised that not all categories that emerged from the analysis of interview transcripts were addressed in these documents. Some issues such as societal views of the campuses were not discussed in annual reports or strategic plans.

5.   Data analysis

Data analysis is giving meaning to data by looking for similarities, differences and patterns that explain the phenomenon being studied (Gray, 2009; Bell, 2005). This is accomplished through reading and re-

reading the data rigorously and logically, breaking them down into small pieces, and looking for categories and relationships between these pieces (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Silverman, 2005). Data analysis in this study was conducted in two stages. First, data collected through interviews were analysed following the first two steps of the grounded theory approach using open coding followed by axial coding (Miles & Huberman, 1994). However, the data analysis was not extended to further steps of the grounded theory approach (Strauss & Corbin 1990). Instead, the second stage of the data analysis was theme analysis (Bell, 2005) through which I was able to identify the main themes related to the perceived challenges and how participants deal with them.

Analysis of interview data was conducted manually but given the large volume of data, I used Nvivo software version 9 to manage the storage, retrieval and analysis of data. Nvivo handles data in the form of documents, interviews transcripts, among others and facilitates the coding process. It also allows researchers to add comments, notes and memos during the analysis process and provides several advanced tools for analysis and display (Bazeley, 2007).

5.1. Open coding

The grounded theory approach, developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967), aims at generating theory from data (Punch 1998). It consists of a number of systematic procedures through which the researcher can develop an inductively derived theory from the data gathered (Strauss & Corbin 1990). This is done by identifying core categories at a high level of abstraction by going through a three-stage coding process (Punch, 1998): open, axial and selective coding (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

In open coding, events and actions that are similar in nature or related in meaning are identified and grouped together into categories or

subcategories (Gray, 2009; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Each time researchers find an instance of a category, they compare it with previous instances, and if the new instance does not fit the category, the definition of the category is modified or a new category created (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Seidel (1998) argues that open coding is an important tool for data analysis since concepts emerge from the raw data and are grouped into categories for later stages of analysis which enhances the validity of the analysis. However, he argues that the process is time-consuming and requires a lot of effort, especially with large data sets.

Using a list of codes developed for the pilot study I assigned each sentence or groups of sentences to one or more codes under a main code. For example, the response "*We're now doing community classes for children starting at five years and up, summer classes. In part because it's a need in the country at this moment in the country's history, but also it's a nice connection to the community.*" was coded under two main codes: 1) outreach to the community; and 2) support to the host state. This statement clarifies the efforts made in this campus to respond to the needs of the state and the community by taking initiatives that strengthen the institutions ties with the community.

At the end of the open coding process, the number of codes that emerged from the transcripts reached 148 and the codes were assigned to very specific pieces of the text. Every time a new code emerged in one transcript, I went back to the other transcripts to see if it can apply to any part of them (Creswell, 2009b). At the end of the open coding process, codes and the corresponding text were organized in sub-categories under main categories. The main categories and subcategories that emerged were used as the basis for axial coding. A list of the categories and sub-categories is in appendix D.

5.2. Axial coding

In axial coding, the researcher takes categories identified in open coding and tries to make connections between categories and subcategories (Miles & Huberman, 1994) by discovering relationships between the categories and the way they relate to each other (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Given the relatively high number of interviews conducted and the participation of five branch campuses and the host organization, nineteen categories were identified with two to twenty sub-categories under each category (appendix D).

In axial coding I have examined the categories and subcategories and connected them in different ways which required a lot of thinking. I have examined every subcategory and considered if it can be linked to its category in a different way going back and forth between categories and subcategories (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Given the large number of categories and the interconnectedness of some of the challenges and issues identified, some sub-categories appeared to be related to more than one category. This required several iterations of reading and re-reading of the coded text and thinking about the relationships of the categories and sub-categories.

5.3. Theme analysis

Themes are units derived from patterns such as conversation topics or feelings (Taylor & Bogdan, 1998) and are identified by bringing together the various components of ideas (Leininger, 1985). Thematic analysis is one of the most commonly used methods of qualitative analysis (Denscombe, 2007) in which the researcher identifies a limited number of themes which can come from direct quotes or paraphrasing ideas from the data (Silverman, 2005). Searching for themes and patterns systematically provides an illuminating description of the phenomenon in question

(Tesch, 1990). Although thematic analysis provides rich insights into phenomena and is widely used across a range of research approaches (Braun & Clarke, 2006), it has been criticised for lack of depth as it results in fragmenting parts of the data and possibly leads to misinterpretation of the data (Attride-Stirling, 2001).

In thematically analysing data for this study all units of data (e.g. sentences or paragraphs) referring to a particular category or sub-category were extracted and examined in detail (Lacey & Luff, 2001). For example, all units of data that refer to 'co-education challenges' were pulled together to be examined in terms of: 1) aspects of challenge, e.g. in class versus in extra-curricular activities; 2) reasons of challenge, e. g. students coming from gender-segregated schools and not used to mixed-gender classes; and 3) response to challenge, e. g. 'let students manage it' or 'pre-assign student groups'. This helped me identify the following themes from the data:

a. The branch campuses are viewed positively by many families in the society but some families have concerns about some of the campuses because they are Western, offer liberal education, and adopt a co-educational model.

b. The co-educational model seems to be accepted by many families and does not represent a challenge for any of the campuses. However, minor issues arise outside classes, during extracurricular activities and during trips. Some students who are not used to mixed-gender classes find it uncomfortable in the first few weeks sit in mixed-gender groups. However, this does not persist for a long time.

c. The lack of student academic preparation, especially among citizens, is a major challenge for most campuses. However, the

demand for programmes offered by the campuses can alleviate this challenge.

d.   Teaching the home university curriculum in the branch campuses raise challenges in campuses that offer social science or arts programmes. Other campuses which offer Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) programmes do not have issues related to the curriculum.

e.   Branch campus senior officers have made efforts to deal with the challenges they perceive and have adjusted to fit the local context but they still struggle to deal with the lack of student academic preparation.

f.   Campus officers need to understand the aims of the host state by interacting with government entities and the private sector, clearly align the campus goals to those of the host state, interact with the society, and maintain the quality standards of the home university.

g.   The impact of the local culture manifests itself in a number of aspects such as the teaching and operations. However, this varies from one campus to another according to the disciplines offered by the campuses.

6.   Pilot Study

Before embarking on this full study I have conducted a pilot study which involved interviewing four participants from three branch campuses using an interview schedule. The participants were from Cloud, Night, and Volcano universities. These institutions represent campuses at various stages of development since Volcano University campus is the first one established in the host organization whereas Night University campus is the latest. These campuses also represent the two types of home

universities: state and private universities. These participants were not approached later for interviews in the full study.

Data collected in the pilot study were analysed through open coding first. In this stage, I initially developed a list of codes and started assigning parts of the interview scripts to these codes. However, several parts of the text did not relate to any of the codes I had developed, so more codes were added to the original list of codes. At the end of this open coding process, seven main categories, e.g. 'co-education issues' and 'student recruitment', and 35 subcategories were identified (see appendix E). Then in axial coding, I have tried to link the sub-categories to the categories in new ways. At the end, data were thematically analysed to identify themes related to the research questions.

Conducting a pilot study was a very useful experience in many ways. First, it was an opportunity to interact with senior officials in some of the branch campuses and see how they responded to the invitation to participate in the study. Second, I have piloted the interview schedule and made some edits to some of the questions. Finally, I have obtained deeper understanding of the relationships of the campuses and their home universities as well as the relationships between the campuses and the host organization. This was very useful when conducting the interviews in the full study.

7. Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness of research can be enhanced by understanding, reflecting on, and reporting the researcher's role and issues of power, participant validation, and keeping an audit trail (Bassey, 1999; Silverman, 2005; Creswell, 2009a). A brief description of the efforts made to enhance the trustworthiness of this research is provided in this section.

7.1. Reflexivity and issues of power

In qualitative research, researchers need to be aware of situations in which they might bias the responses of participants (Gray, 2009), and should adopt a reflexive approach and think about how their backgrounds or values might affect their research (Silverman, 2005). Therefore, researchers should identify their potential biases that may shape their interpretation of the data (Creswell, 2009a) by keeping a reflexive journal throughout the study to note their methodological decisions and any situations where their values or beliefs might have affected the way they conducted the research (Guba & Lincoln, 1994).

Therefore, during and shortly after each interview I made some reflections in writing about how the interview went, my role as an interviewer, and the interviewee's reactions to some questions (Denscombe, 2007). These notes were useful when I transcribed the interviews and thought about any impact I might have had on the interviewees or any external factors that might have affected the way participants responded to my questions (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). I also took notes while doing the open coding to reflect on some previously held ideas and perceptions towards the branch campuses and their relationships with the host organization and the society (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

Since I do not work at any of the branch campuses or the host organization, I am not considered an insider. However, since at the time of data collection, I worked at a research institution that offered policy advice to decision makers in the host state, the participants might have had this in mind and purposefully shared their positive views only. This has made me partially, no fully, an outsider. The participants were aware of my affiliation as I introduced myself and presented my business card in the beginning of each interview.

There has been some debate about the view of insider-outsider research which Mercer (2007) summarised as a dichotomy with some thinking that only outsiders can be objective and detached from the subjects of the research while others thinking that only insiders have the understanding of the context and the rapport with the participants that enable them to understand the data. However, Mercer argues that insider-outsider research should not be viewed as a dichotomy, since this will make researchers consider one being better than the other. Rather they should be viewed as two poles of a continuum with some fluidity. This view will enable researchers to value both insider and outsider research and recognize their strengths and weaknesses (ibid).

Being an insider has advantages as well as drawbacks (Silverman, 2005). As I do not know the participants in this research and do not work with them, I think, this has encouraged them to be open and candid during the interviews. The drawback of not being an insider is the lack of knowledge about some issues relevant to the research study in the case campuses and the ignorance of any political sensitivity inside or among the campuses or the participants (ibid). To counter these drawbacks, I have read several documents published by the branch campuses while preparing for the study (Gray, 2009) and have been following the news of the campuses and the host organization for a number of years. Additionally, I have provided detailed information about the study to all potential participants when I first approached them. This has resulted in some of them declining to participate which was understandable (Silverman, 2005).

7.2. Audit trail

Audit trail is an additional strategy that enhances trustworthiness of qualitative research, especially case study research (Yin, 2003). Audit trail involves keeping track of all steps taken during the study in order for the

research to be transparent (Gray, 2009). Since planning for the data collection and thinking about the campuses and the potential participants, I have been taking notes of my thoughts and decisions about the research in a log that I dedicated for the study. For example, I have noted instances when participants asked questions about anonymity and confidentiality of interviews as this might reflect a concern on their part and might possibly affect their responses. I have also taken notes when participants referred to relevant publications or documents so I could include them in the document review.

7.3. Participant validation

Participant validation is another strategy for ensuring dependability of the research (Creswell, 2009). It involves going back to the research participants and presenting data collected for checking and confirmation, and presenting findings for comments (Silverman, 2005). Participant validation is also known as member checks. Guba and Lincoln (1989) regard member checks as "the single most critical technique for establishing credibility" (239). Before moving to data analysis I have shared the interview transcripts with the participants and asked them to review, confirm, or edit their transcripts. In most cases, the participants did not have any edits but in a few cases there were minor edits which I incorporated into the final version of the transcripts.

8. Ethical issues

Ethics are very important for any research study, especially those that involve human subjects since participants might be harmed as a result of their participation in research if research ethics are not strictly adhered to (Bell, 2005). Issues of anonymity, confidentiality, informed consent and voluntary participation are key considerations for the ethical conduct of research (Bell, 2005; Creswell, 2009a). The University of Leicester's Ethics

Code of Practice (2011) clearly outlines the ethical standards for conducting research to which I have adhered since I started approaching potential participants for the study. This research project is a multiple case study and, therefore, it was necessary to meet stringent ethical standards because participants' identities might be easily recognised in this type of research (Bassey, 1999). In the next few paragraphs I discuss how ethical standards were adhered to in this study.

8.1. Informed consent

Research must be conducted with full consent of all participants, and research subjects should be fully aware of their participation and their ability to withdraw from the research at any time without having to give reasons (Bell, 2005; Denscombe, 2007; Creswell, 2009a). I have drafted an invitation letter that I sent to all potential participants when I first approached them. The letter provided background information about the researcher and the study; outlined expectations of participants; and assured participant anonymity (appendix B).

When positive responses were received, I sent a consent form to each participant before interviews were held (appendix C). The form assured confidentiality of information gathered and anonymity of respondents, and highlighted that participation in the study is voluntary and that participants can withdraw from the research at any point without having to give reasons. Participants' consent was obtained in writing by signing the consent form before conducting the interviews.

8.2. Confidentiality

Interviews were tape recorded, upon approval of the participants, using a digital voice recorder (Seidman, 2006) in MP3 format. All electronic files of the study were saved in an encrypted folder on a personal computer. Although the branch campuses' annual reports are accessible to the

public, they were treated with caution. Information that could lead to the identification of campuses or individuals was not included when reporting the findings.

8.3. Anonymity

Researchers should protect the identity of the research participants throughout the study (Denscombe, 2007). Although branch campuses and participants are not anonymous to the researcher given the nature of the study, their identities were protected throughout the study, and findings were reported anonymously (Bell, 2005) as per the ethical approval granted by the University of Leicester. Pseudonyms for campuses and participants were used in the data analysis and for reporting the findings. All campuses were assigned pseudonyms using weather-related words such as 'Cloud University' branch campus. Arabic names were used as pseudonyms for all participants, most of whom are Westerners. A list of the participating campuses and individuals and the pseudonyms used was saved in an encrypted file (Creswell, 2009a).

9. Summary

In this chapter I provided a description of the research design and how it was conducted, and outlined the methodology used. I also explained the data collection and analysis processes and discussed trustworthiness of the research and the ethical issues involved. Since the aim of this study is to provide insights into the challenges perceived by senior officers of university branch campuses and ways they deal with these challenges, the interpretive paradigm was considered appropriate for this study. The qualitative nature of the study lent itself to the qualitative research method and the case study strategy was considered appropriate for addressing the research questions and providing insights into this model

of TNHE. This research was conducted as an exploratory multiple case study of five branch campuses in a GCC state.

Data were collected through in-depth qualitative interviews with twenty-one senior officers from five campuses and four officials from the host organization. Data collected through interviews were complemented and compared with data from the campuses' annual reports. These data sets were analysed following the first two stages of the grounded theory approach using open coding and axial coding. However, selective coding which is the final stage of the grounded theory approach was not applied since the aim of the study is to understand the phenomenon rather than to generate a theory. Instead, I thematically analysed the data and identified themes through which insights into the perceived challenges in university branch campuses in a GCC state can be understood. In the next chapter I present and discuss the data collected and analysed in this study.

Chapter Four: Data Presentation and Discussion

In this chapter I present data collected through both interviews with campus senior officers and host organization officials, and the document review relevant to the research questions and the literature review. In section one I highlight the challenges as identified by the research participants. Section two is dedicated to discussing the impact of the local culture on operating the campuses. In section three, I discuss how participants dealt with the challenges identified in section one. In each of these sections I follow a case-by-case approach including a brief within-case analysis with a comparison to the relevant literature. After presenting participants' views from all campuses on one topic, I analyse these views across the campuses. In the final section, I discuss how findings of this study can inform policy and practice. In chapter five, I theorise the findings and identify the new contributions to knowledge based on the systematic multiple case study analysis, and provide conclusions and recommendations of the study.

To address the first two research questions, I asked the participants from the branch campuses to talk about the challenges they perceive as they lead their campuses in a context which is different from that of their home universities. To address the third research question, I asked the participants to explain what they do to address these challenges and how successful their efforts are in this regard. Finally, I asked them to identify what they think are lessons learnt from their experience for how to successfully operate a branch campus of a university in a different context so as to inform future policy and practice.

1.   Challenges in university branch campuses in a GCC state

Participants in this study interact with prospective students and their families during public events and outreach activities. They also interact with enrolled students and their parents. The views of the participants in this study reflect their engagement with the students and their families in

different situations. It is important to note, however, that some participants have more interaction with the students and their families than others. For example, Assistant Deans of Admission and Assistant Deans of Student Affairs might have more frequent interaction with the students and their families than the Deans or Associate Deans for Academic Affairs. This should be taken into consideration when understanding participants' views.

1.1. Families' views of the branch campuses

When asked how they thought prospective students and their parents view the campuses, all 21 participants from the branch campuses and one from the host organization indicated that the institutions are viewed positively by many families but seven of these participants and two from the host organization, think there are also some families who hold negative views of the campuses. Five participants from the branch campuses and three from the host organization think that during the ten-year period of developing and establishing branch campuses in the host state views of many parents and students have changed from 'negative' and 'suspicious' in the early years to 'positive' and 'supportive' in the more recent years. A summary of the participants' views is provided in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1: Perceptions of views of prospective students and their Parents

Campus / View	Cloud (3)*	Night (4)	Tornado (5)	Volcano (5)	Wind (4)	Host (4)
Positive by *many* **families**	-	All	All	All	All	Saeed, Diab, Kamal
conservative by *some*	-	All			Mohamed	All
Initial reservations; changed to positive shortly	All	-	-	-	-	-
Views changed over the years	All	-	-	-	-	Saeed

*Number of participants from the campus

Below is a detailed presentation and discussion of the responses regarding these views for each campus and a comparison of views across campuses. The data are presented in alphabetical order of the name of the branch campus. Views of officials from the host organization are presented at the end.

1.1.1.Cloud University (business, computer science, information systems)

Cloud University campus offers business, computer science and information systems programmes. The campus had been in operation for almost 10 years at the time of data collection. All three participants from Cloud University think that prospective students and their parents who are nationals of the state have reservations about the campuses but once students start their programmes these views change positively.

For example, Rami (Associate Dean) states

So I think in a lot of cases, the families [citizens] before they had enrolled or spent much time at [the campus], they seem to have a lot of reservations about it. … we would generally have a very positive relationship with the families once their students were accepted and had joined and then were part of our programme.

Magdy (Associate Dean) supports this view by sharing a story of one of his students whose parents were so concerned about her staying late on campus but when she completed a project and presented a robot that can avoid obstacles, her parents' view changed completely. Gameela (Assistant Dean) reported a similar view when stating "Although families usually have concerns about our campus, and this applies to all branch campuses, because they do not know what to expect, they become more supportive when their children start their programmes.".

Additionally, all three participants from Cloud University campus reported a change of views towards their campus over the years from 'suspicion' to 'support' albeit for varied reasons. Gameela attributes the change of view to the families' lack of brand awareness of the campus initially. She states "I think this view has evolved over time. When we first came here we were an unknown product, many people did not know what [Cloud] University was. But now I think our alumni made a difference. Parents started to realize the prestige of [Cloud University]." Rami thinks the main reason for the initial negative view of the campus in the early years was offering Western education. He states "… one of the big (challenges) was just being too Western an education for some conservative families in the society."

The perceptions of Cloud University participants regarding the negative views of the campus confirm the concerns Altbach (2010a) and Wang (2008) raise regarding Western branch campuses in developing countries, these views change once the students start their programmes and parents become more familiar with the campus. Therefore, the initial negative view

of families towards the campuses changes quickly which represents a new insight into this aspect of TNHE. Since there is no literature that addresses views of families over the years given the fact that the branch campus phenomenon is rather recent, the perceptions of Cloud University participants in this regard can be considered a new contribution to knowledge in understanding views towards Western campuses in the GCC region.

1.1.2.Night University (communication and journalism)

Night University offers communications and journalism programmes. It is the latest campus established in the nation state and, therefore, its senior officers, faculty and staff have only had a few years to establish connections with the prospective students and their parents. All four participants from Night University think that many prospective students and their parents view the campuses positively. However, they have all noted some negative views by some conservative families. Eman (Dean and CEO) states "I think they (parents and students) view them (branch campuses) with amazement. … I think they are impressed …" Refaat (Senior Associate Dean) describes the positive view of the campuses by stating "I believe they (parents and students) view this as an opportunity, maybe the ticket they need to be successful." The other two respondents from Night University, Darwish and Soha, expressed similar views.

On the other hand, Refaat indicates that conservative families have a negative view of the campus by stating "some people … are asking 'What's going on there: boys and girls seeing each other?' and this kind of intermingling bothers all the conservative [citizens] apparently." Soha (Associate Dean) who has been with the campus since its inception had a more direct response by stating "I hear that we are basically considered to be akin to what we call 'a sinful place.' The more conservative elements in the society view us that way." Along the same lines Eman discussed his

view by stating "Some parents are not thrilled with the coeducational aspect of the programme. They might feel it is too progressive." Darwish, the Chief Operations Officer, succinctly explains what he thinks is the reason for this view by stating "it (the education hub and its campuses) is a bubble of that (Western education) sitting in the Middle East, around a much more typically conservative perspective on education."

There is consensus among participants from Night University that their campus is viewed positively by many families but conservative families hold negative views towards it. The two main reasons mentioned for this negative view were 1) the co-education aspect (Refaat, Eman); 2) offering Western and progressive education (Soha, Eman, Darwish). The concerns raised by Altbach (2010a) and Wang (2008) in the literature only apply to conservative families in the society and do not seem to affect the growth of the campuses and their ability to attract and retain students as clearly indicated in the annual report of the campus which shows a consistent remarkable increase in the number of applicants to the campus. In the first year of operation, only 35 applications were received. Five years later, the number grew to over 200.

1.1.3. Tornado University (engineering)

Tornado University campus had been established for ten years at the time of data collection. Therefore, its senior officers and staff have had relatively more time to understand parents and students' views than their counterparts in other campuses. Tornado University offers various engineering programmes which are very appealing in the host state and the region, especially petroleum engineering which is highly demanded given the importance of the oil and gas industries in the GCC region (Willoughby, 2008; Stasz et al., 2007). This campus has the largest student body and the largest number of citizens enrolled in its programmes.

All five participants from Tornado University agree that prospective students and their parents view the branch campus positively. For example, Jawaher (Chief Operating Officer) states "the impression of …. (this campus) is very positive." Talal (Assistant Dean) echoes the same response by stating "My opinion is they view the [education hub] campuses as elite universities. They are desired by most." Coheir (Assistant Dean) supports this view by stating "It is very interesting, because we do focus groups with students before they are admitted and after they are admitted, and I think they look at [Tornado University] and our programme as a preferred education choice in the region." She adds that "the community is very receptive to things that we do. I think we have got a really good reputation in the community. We have deep connections in the community, so they are very welcoming … they want us to participate." The other two participants, Mansour and Hani supported the same view.

Talal and Coheir add that even some conservative families view their campus positively. Talal confirms "We have some very conservative families who sent their kids to our campus because they did not want to send their child to the United States. But they wanted a really high-quality education". Coheir concurs by stating "But we think the institution is viewed very positively, both by conservative [national] families and by less conservative families. It is seen as a safe environment, a respectful environment, and one that is aware of and respectful of [national] tradition and values." The arguments of Altbach (2010a) and Wang (2008) about negative views of the society towards Western branch campuses does not hold in this campus.

1.1.4.Volcano University (design arts)

Volcano University campus was the first campus established in the hub. It offers programmes in design arts and has a majority of female local

students, mostly citizens of the host state. There is consensus among the participants from Volcano University that parents and students have a positive view of the campus.

Ameera (Dean) thinks that because her campus was the first one established in the education hub, it has good links with the society. She states "Almost everybody I meet when I am out at (public) events, [citizens] that I meet at events, they say, 'oh my daughter is going there' or 'my sister is going there." Ghalib (Associate Dean) confirms this view and adds that "the students ... see it as being prestigious to come here .... I kind of get that sense, as well, from talking to people, that it is like an honour to be here." Jasim (Associate Dean) concurs by stating "they're happy to be part of [the education hub], part of the campuses here." At the time of data collection Volcano University campus was celebrating 15 years at the education hub. This can explain the strong links of this campus with the society.

1.1.5. Wind University (medicine)

Wind University campus offers a medical programme which is six-years long and is academically more challenging than programmes offered by other campuses. It was the second campus to be established in the host state and had been in operation for over ten years at the time of data collection. Three participants from Wind University believe their campus is viewed positively by parents and students and one thinks the views vary between positive and conservative.

For example, Bairam (Associate Dean) states "They (students and parents) feel that it is a remarkably good opportunity." Tahani (Associate Dean) concurs "I see them (the students) viewing them (the branch campuses) as very prestigious opportunities to join." Jomaa (Dean) expressed a similar perspective. However, Mohamed (Associate Dean) thinks that the views vary across the community. He states "I have visited high schools a lot

and I see a broad spectrum of knowledge about (the campuses). It varies from family to family. Some view it as a very good place to send their children to university but others see it with a more conservative eye given that the institutions are American."

Views of Bairam, Tahani and Jomaa clearly refute the arguments of Altbach (2010a) and Wang (2008) regarding the negative view of Western branch campuses. The evidence here clearly indicates that this campus is viewed positively in the society. However, Mohamed's view highlights the concern of some families about the campus being Western which supports Altbach and Wang's arguments.

1.1.6. The host organization

The host organization was established a few years before the first branch campus was set up. Officials of the organization work with branch campus senior staff on areas such as facilities management, government and administrative affairs, student recruitment and outreach, and public relations and communications. One participant from the host state thinks that prospective students and their parents have suspicions about the education hub campuses. The other three participants think that many families view the campuses positively with some families having conservative views.

Asmaa (Senior Specialist) thinks that prospective students and their parents have suspicions about the branch campuses. She states "For prospective students, I think that is where our challenge is. There are lots of stereotypes of what [the education hub] is and what happens behind the fenced wall that we are in." It is important to note that Asmaa is the longest serving employee in the host state, and although she is not a citizen of the state, she has lived all her life there. She has been involved in a lot of interaction with school students and parents during recruitment and outreach activities and events as she puts it "… a lot of work with the

community where we visited the schools in person ..." So, her perspective reflects direct interaction with students and parents.

All other participants think many families have positive views of the campuses and some have conservative views. Saeed (Project Manager) states "I think most of them (parents and students) view these campuses positively. There might be some people who see these campuses as (culturally) inappropriate because they are American (Western)." Diab (Associate Vice President) supports this view. He thinks that "when it comes to looking at the way that our universities are perceived, I think you've got the huge enthusiast, and then you've got some other people that are probably pretty cautious." Kamal (Vice President) concurs by stating "they (families) look at the campuses as very strong academic experience and very strong brand name universities that would help their children in the future." However, he also thinks that "there might be some who view these institutions as foreign to our culture." It is important to note that Kamal is a citizen of the state, and Diab is a Western expatriate. Both participants have senior positions in the host organization and this might have kept them from direct interaction with the families.

Saeed thinks the views of families have changed over time. Saeed attributes the change of view to recognizing the values these institutions bring to the host country. He states

> I think people are changing. They started to see the difference these campuses are making. The problem when we first started was that many parents did not know the value of these institutions; they did not know the brand. ..... So some of them were not enthusiastic about sending their children here but now I see a huge difference in how people view these campuses.

The views of Saeed, Diab and Kamal clearly refute the argument of Altbach (2010a) and Wang (2008) regarding the lack of acceptance of Western campuses by local societies. However, the concerns Asmaa raises about families' suspicions validate this argument to some extent. However, the consistent remarkable increase of student enrolment at all branch campuses proves otherwise. The change of views explained by Saeed has not been addressed in the literature and is, therefore, an important gap to be filled by further research.

1.1.7. Discussion

The indication of most participants from the campuses that their institutions are viewed positively by many families reflects a shared perception. This perception refutes the argument of Altbach (2010a) and Wang (2008) who think that Western branch campuses might not be acceptable in conservative societies. The participants' perception is more in line with Coffman's (2003) argument about the lack of resistance to Western education in the GCC region.

Although, the negative views of some families, as mentioned by some participants, are highlighted in the literature and attributed to the branch campuses being foreign, secular and Western, this did not affect the growth and success of the case campuses as evidenced by the steady increase of applications and enrolment. The change of families' views over time and the increasing awareness of Western universities' brands in the recent years seem to be gaps in the literature. This might be due to the fact that the boom in branch campus development took place only recently, and more time is needed to study the families' views towards these campuses when they are well established and more integrated into the society.

1.2. Adopting a co-educational model in conservative societies

The branch campuses are co-educational institutions and all of them have a significant percentage of female students. Night (communication and journalism) and Volcano (design arts) universities have majority female students. Table 4.2 below provides a percentage breakdown of student gender and nationality for each institution at the time of data collection.

Table 4.2: Percentage of students by gender and nationality

Campus	Male %	Female %	Citizens %	Non-citizens %
Cloud	50	50	40	60
Night	20	80	40	60
Tornado	60	40	55	45
Volcano	10	90	55	45
Wind	53	47	not available	not available

When asked whether the co-education model of the campuses represented a challenge for senior officers, all participants indicated that mixed-gender education is not currently an issue in their campuses. However, some participants indicated that they had some challenges with co-education in the early years of operation only. Some participants also indicated that they face minor challenges with self-segregation in the first few weeks for freshman students. A few participants mentioned some gender-related challenges outside of the classroom. Table 4.3 below outlines these views and is followed by a detailed presentation of participants' responses.

Table 4.3: Adopting a co-educational model in a conservative society

Campus / View	Cloud (3)	Night (4)	Tornado (5)	Volcano (5)	Wind (4)	Host (4)
Not a major challenge	All	All	All	All	All	All
Minor challenges in first few weeks only	Magdy, Gameela	Refaat, Soha	Coheir, Talal	-	-	All
Minor challenges in early years	All	-	Mansour	-	-	Asma
Minor challenges out of class	Gameela	Refaat, Eman, Soha	-	Ghalib, Verna	-	-

1.2.1. Cloud University (business, computer science and information systems)

All three participants from Cloud University think that coeducation does not represent a major challenge currently although there were issues about to coeducation in the early years of operation. Two respondents (Magdy and Gameela) mentioned the discomfort of some students in the first few weeks, and Gameela highlighted some minor challenges related to coeducation outside of the classroom.

Magdy (Associate Dean) states "I used to hear that having a mixed gender environment challenges cultural norms, and certain families frown upon that. Now, this is getting easier over the years, and it's improving quite a lot …" He also referred to how quickly students overcome the coeducation

issues that arise at the beginning of each year by stating "I think they resolve it very, very quickly."

Gameela (Assistant Dean) supports this view by stating "In the early days, yes. I think in the early days because the message wasn't that clear who we were. … But this was only year one and two (students)." Gameela further elaborates that the number of students who had issues with the co-education model was very small. She states

> Certainly, the first year we did have some students come in and say, 'oh wow! I did not know this was co-ed', and expressed some challenge to that, but I am really talking about two students, so this is a very small number. Following that, we have not really had anything that I would call a major issue.

She also supports Magdy's view regarding students who have challenges with coeducation but overcome them quickly. She states "Usually by their second year, they're absolutely fluid and comfortable working in co-ed groups. Most do in the first year as well, so it is usually a matter of a few weeks or months."

Rami (Associate Dean) also confirmed that co-education was a challenge in the early years. He states "Most of our students came in from single sex schools at that point, so this was the first time they had co-ed classes. So that was a big one (challenge)." He further explains his view by stating

> Co-education interestingly was an issue every year … because it was almost always the same group of freshmen girls who would be coming from gender-segregated high schools and they find it very uncomfortable and difficult to do that. And they would say, 'We have to be segregated.' And they would push for a much more segregated experience.

Gameela is the only respondent from this campus who discussed coeducation issues outside of the classroom, specifically during trips. She states "We have students travel extensively… They go to conferences … we send them to do service all over the world. They go in male and female groups. There are some of the more conservative women who will opt not to go on trips, and that's very, very few." Gameela is the Assistant Dean of Student Affairs and, therefore, seems to be more familiar with students' concerns outside of the classroom than other participants.

The concerns raised in the literature about co-education in Western branch campuses in the Middle East (Witte, 2010b; Asquith, 2006) do not seem to hold in the case of Cloud University especially after the first few years of operation. The growing number of female students enrolled in this campus suggests that families do not find it culturally inappropriate to enrol their children in these institutions. This is in line with Kane's argument (2013) regarding the current positive situation with Western co-educational institutions in the region. However, there are still some minor issues for some students when they go on trips in mixed-gender groups which seems to be a gap in the literature.

1.2.2. Night University (communication and journalism)

All four participants agree that coeducation does not represent a challenge for them although Refaat and Soha indicate that some students express discomfort with coeducation when they first join the campus. Refaat, Eman and Soha indicate that some coeducation issues arise outside of the classroom. It is noteworthy that Night University is the latest of all campuses to be established in the education hub. Other campuses have been operating for a number of years before this campus opened its doors.

Darwish (Chief Operations Officer) clearly states "We have not really had gender-related issues that I would say are unique", and Refaat (Senior Associate Dean) confirms "It is not an issue here." Eman (Dean and CEO)

and Soha (Associate Dean) support the same view. Eman confirms "No they (students) are very comfortable because they have made a choice to come here" but admits that some parents have concerns by stating "Some parents are not thrilled with the coeducational aspect of the programme. They might feel it is too progressive." Nevertheless, this did not stop them from sending their children to the campus, even the traditional families as Eman puts it "… a lot of very traditional students go here and function very well."

Refaat and Soha noted that in the first few weeks there is discomfort for some students. Refaat states "you will see that the males sit on one side of the room and the girls be on the other side … but that ends pretty quickly." Soha concurs and provides the following explanation for the self-segregation that happens in the first few weeks. She states

> So if the kids came from an international school, they worked in co-educational situations but when we have kids who came from [a local state school] and have not studied in the same class with boys, especially at the beginning of their freshman year, they might self-segregate, so the boys are in one side, girls on the other in the classroom.

Refaat, Eman and Soha mentioned some challenges related to coeducation outside the classroom. Refaat provided the following example

> There are times when it is an issue for them (students). We take students on reporting trips and we are going to send some students in a couple of weeks to Athens, they were going to do some stories about the Greek economy. … There was going to be one guy who wanted to go and the girls went to the professor and objected.

Also outside the classroom Soha indicates that "There are sometimes issues." And further explains that "We see concerns over girls and boys

within close proximity of each other" which sometimes becomes problematic for girls when it is reported to their families. This can explain the concerns some families have with regards to sending their daughters to mixed-gender institutions.

The co-educational issues reported by Night University participants reflect the concerns raised by Witte (2010b) and Asquith (2006). However, these challenges do not seem to be major in this campus as evidenced by the consensus of its participants. Kane's argument (2013) regarding the recent positive view towards co-education in the GCC region seems to hold in this campus.

1.2.3.Tornado University (engineering)

At Tornado University there is consensus that co-education is not a challenge currently. However, like participants from all other campuses, Coheir and Talal think that it takes some students a short while in their first year to get used to co-education. Mansour is the only respondent from this campus who discussed challenges related to coeducation in the early years of the campus.

When talking about current challenges related to gender, Hani (Associate Dean) clearly states "I don't think there is any problem. At least, I haven't really seen any problem or any concern on that part." Talal (Assistant Dean) asserts "Not at all." However, Mansour (Dean and CEO) described some gender issues that existed earlier. He states "… in the first years before I got here, I am told that there were some gender-related issues. But now I think we have gotten past that …"

Talal and Coheir discussed the situation of some students who are not comfortable with coeducation in the beginning of their first year but both respondents do not think that this represents a challenge for them. Talal states "It's a little bit nervous at first, but by the time they get through the

programme, it is very normal to them. It is not a problem." Coheir (Assistant Dean) echoed the same view by stating "… when they start as freshman, we have got the black (colour of women's national dress) side of the room and the white (colour of men's national dress) side of the room and, you know, they are very nervous about mixing…. but gradually they're more comfortable."

Similar to the situation of Cloud and Night universities, the participants from Tornado University do not see any major challenges with the co-education model they adopt unlike what Witte (2010b) and Asquith (2006) argue. However, none of the participants from Tornado University reported any mixed-gender issues outside the classroom unlike the situation in Cloud and Night universities. Although Engineering programmes offered by Tornado University involve lab sessions and the campus organizes student trips, no gender-related issues outside the classroom were raised by the participants.

1.2.4.Volcano University (design arts)

All participants from Volcano University agreed that co-education does not represent a challenge for them and none of them noted any coeducation issues in the early years of this campus or when students first join their programmes. However, some minor gender issues were reported outside the classrooms by Ghalib and Verna.

Ameera (Dean) confirms "It has been fine. There are not any (gender) issues." Ghalib (Associate Dean) echoed the same response by stating "I have never heard of any (gender) issues, that I am aware of." And Jasim (Associate Dean) states "So there have been no major breaches of conduct or anything like that that seemed to have stemmed from gender …" Basem (Associate Dean) confirms this view by indicating "… in the three-and-a-half years I have been here, we have never had an issue per se …"

However, Ghalib highlights issues with regards to student trips. He states "I think when students go on trips, they have to take a chaperone with them, there have to be chaperones to go with them. So that is not something we would ever deal with in the (United) States." Verna (Assistant Dean) described how gender issues that happen outside the class can affect the campus. She states "sometimes there are relationships on campus that the families find out about and then we lose those students." It is noteworthy that Verna has been with this campus for 11 years and is responsible for students' affairs. Therefore, her views might reflect deeper knowledge and understanding of student issues than other participants in this campus.

The consensus among the participants in this campus that there are no challenges related to co-education in classes supports Kane's (2013) recent view of the situation in Western branch campuses. Although the gender-related issues that arise outside the classroom reflect the concerns raised in the literature by Witte (2010b) and Asquith (2006), they do not seem to be major.

1.2.5. Wind University (medicine)

There is consensus at Wind University that co-education is not a challenge in class or outside of class. None of the participants mentioned gender challenges outside the classroom, in the early years of operations or when students first join their programmes.

The three Associate Deans who participated in the study from Wind University negated the existence of any challenges related to co-education. Tahani briefly states "I've never heard anything (regarding co-education being an issue). … I do not see this (co-education) at all as a major issue." Bairam asserts "No …. We have plenty of females who are [citizens] and from the Gulf States and from the rest of the world, and they coexist in a wonderful model." Mohamed confirms "No, we do not have issues with

male and female students. They work well together in class and outside of class." Jomaa (Dean) expressed the same view by stating "I would say during the last four years that I took over, that has never been an issue which was brought up."

Wind University campus was established in the early years of the education hub and offers a medical programme in which male and female students are enrolled. This programme has had a balanced male and female student body since it started. Mohamed (Associate Dean) clarifies that "The number of male and female students is quite balanced here." According to the campus' fact sheet of 2013-2014, the percentage of male and female students in the medical programme is 53% and 47% respectively.

The consensus of the participants from Wind University regarding co-education not being a challenge supports Kane's view (2013) about the recent situation of Western branch campuses in the GCC region. The arguments of Witte (2010b) and Asquith (2006) do not hold in the case of Wind University.

1.2.6. The host organization

Participants from the host organization expressed similar views with regards to co-education not being an issue and that only some students self-segregate in their first few weeks on campus. However, Asma who has been with the host organization for a long time reported several challenges in the early years.

Saeed (Project Manager) concurs with the views of many participants from the campuses by confirming "… since I joined [the education hub], I have not heard of any problems about gender. …. students are here and many have graduated and we do not hear of these problems." Kamal (Vice President) confirms the same view by stating "… in terms of the branch

campuses, they (students and parents) accepted it (co-education). I do not think they have any problems ..." He later explains what he thinks is the reason behind accepting co-education in the campuses. He states "I think for the most part people accepted it because ... it's not a home-grown institution. It is a co-ed institution because it is a foreign institution..."

Diab (Associate Vice President) thinks that students adjust to the mixed-gender environment quickly. He states "There is an initial adjustment period that I understand occurs for many of our students who have not studied in a mixed environment, but people get pretty comfortable with that quickly." Asma (Senior Specialist) clarifies that "... to see the first interaction, if you go to a campus in August, you will see the segregation, like the males go to one side and the girls go another side. But if you come back in the spring, you will see that they are working together."

Asma is the only respondent from the host organization who mentioned gender-related challenges in the early years, perhaps because of her involvement in student recruitment and other related activities in the early years. She clearly states "Yes. Because [the education hub hosted] the first university that is coeducational in [the state], so there was a lot of resistance from parents about specifically sending their daughters here." She further clarifies that "With some parents, we couldn't even get them to just come on a campus visit because they thought there are boys running all over the place and they weren't going to let their girls come in."

The participants from the branch campuses paint a similar picture to most participants from the five campuses. However, since they do not interact directly with the students on daily basis as participants from the campuses do, they do not see any challenges related to gender outside the classroom or during trips.

1.2.7. Discussion

Overall, the mixed-gender education model of Western branch campuses in the host state does not seem to be a major challenge for senior officers in the five case campuses of this study. The number of female students enrolled in the branch campuses supports this conclusion. Female students are well represented in all branch campuses, and it is not only students from the non-citizen community in the state; citizens, most of who are conservative, are also well represented in most branch campuses with a share ranging from 40 to 55 per cent as indicated in table 4.2 above.

1.3. Recruitment of local students and their ability to adapt to and succeed in a Western-style educational environment while maintaining the quality of the home university

The majority of participants from the branch campuses think that many secondary school graduates, especially citizens of the host state, are not well-prepared academically with regards to language, math or science skills, and lack important skills such as problem-solving and critical thinking which are necessary for the type of education offered by the Western branch campuses. This represents a major challenge for campus senior officers. However, three participants from Tornado University and one from Night University do not view this as a challenge. These views are outlined in Table 4.4 below.

Table 4.4: Recruitment of students and their academic preparation

Campus View	Cloud (3)	Night (4)	Tornado (5)	Volcano (5)	Wind (4)	Host (4)
Students lack skills	All	Soha, Refaat, Eman	Talal	Bassem, Ameera	Mohamed, Tahani, Jomaa	Asma
Student preparation is not a challenge	-	Darwish	Mansour, Hani, Coheir, Jawaher	-	-	-

1.3.1.Cloud University (business, computer science and information systems)

All three participants from Cloud University agreed that the lack of student academic preparedness is a major issue. Magdy (Associate Dean) clearly states "Preparedness of the student is one of the biggest obstacles. Language, science, math, their ability to solve problems, moving away from classical education into exploration about the world around us, being curious about the world around us." Gameela (Assistant Dean) shares the same view when discussing the students' academic capabilities. She states "The baseline here for students is somewhat different than it is elsewhere, and that's the way it is. The students are different."

Rami (Associate Dean) concurs but focuses on national students. He states "… by far our biggest challenge was there were simply not enough highly qualified national students to go around." He further explains that "there are only a few hundred [nationals] that graduated from high school

every year that are academically prepared for a very rigorous Western college education." Rami explains how challenging it is for branch campuses by stating "all (branch campuses) have the pressures, strong pressure to admit and enrol ... [national] students and not lower their standards; it is just not possible. There are simply not enough people to go around."

The views of participants from Cloud University are in line with the concerns that Altbach (2010a), Witte (2010a) and Lane and Kinser (2010) raise with regards to the lack of qualified local students who can meet the admission standards of branch campuses.

1.3.2.Night University (communication and journalism)

Three out of the four respondents from Night University expressed similar views as those of Cloud University respondents. For example, Refaat (Senior Associate Dean) thinks there is "... a small percentage of people here who say with confidence that they can write in English." He further elaborates "A lot of students apply ... and a lot of them are turned down not for space reasons, they are turned down because their English isn't good enough, their writing isn't good enough." Soha (Associate Dean) agrees and indicates that "(campus senior officers) also deal with issues because we are English language-based and our students are not working in the English language."

Language is not the only skill that students lack. Soha also thinks that campuses offer "... a different education style that a lot of students are not used to. A lot of students who come here are used to a more recitation style." She further elaborates "... number one thing is that students do not have here the beginning of critical thinking skills." Soha admits there are efforts to reform K-12 education but thinks these efforts are not enough to produce a large number of students who qualify for admission at the campuses. She states "We deal with issues because even with the great

reforms that have happened with the K-12 education here it's still not at the level necessary to produce a large number of students capable of working at the elite institutions. There is a gap there."

Darwish is the only respondent from this campus who does not see an issue with student academic preparedness. He states "We're meeting our (enrolment) targets. On an annual basis we've seen a higher quality student and more of them. So we're seeing the student quality come up …" Darwish is the Chief Operations Office and is, therefore, not involved in teaching or academic affairs. His view seems to focus on meeting enrolment targets only.

With the exception of the Chief Operations Officer, the views of all other participants from Night University (the Dean, a Senior Associate Dean, and an Associate Dean) support the arguments of Altbach (2010a), Witte (2010a) and Lane and Kinser (2010) regarding the lack of qualified local students who can meet the admission standards of branch campuses.

1.3.3. Tornado University (engineering)

Only one participant from Tornado University mentioned academic challenges related to lack of student preparedness. Talal (Assistant Dean) thinks it is challenging to find students who are well prepared. He states "The biggest challenge that we face is not getting in applications. We have way more than we need. It is finding students whose English skills are high enough, and for us their math skills." He further explains that "Our students, most of them did not grow up speaking English."

Although Mansour (Dean and CEO) agrees that some students may not be well-prepared, he does not view this as a challenge unique to his campus. He states

> We have students that come in with varying levels of preparation in mathematics, varying levels of ability to speak English … So we do

> things here exactly like we would do in [the home university] when
> we have students like that. So instead of maybe starting the student
> with engineering calculus, we may start the student with Pre-
> calculus and work them up. So, these are all situations that we are
> used to seeing in [the home university], used to dealing with.

The other three participants from Tornado University do not see any
challenges related to lack of student preparedness. For example, Hani,
Associate Dean, states "So we have been fortunate in that regard that
most of the people are highly qualified. The SAT score is as good as the
[home university] score, and we use the same standard for the admission."

Tornado University is the only campus that does not seem to face
challenges with student academic preparation. The arguments of Altbach
(2010a), Witte (2010a) and Lane and Kinser (2010) regarding the lack of
qualified local students who can meet the admission standards of branch
campuses do not hold in this campus. Tornado University offers a number
of engineering programmes which are highly demanded by both citizens
and expatriates in the host state. It also has the largest student body
among all campuses. According to the 2008 annual report of Tornado
University, the number of applications grew ten times in the first five
years. The demand for engineering programmes offered by this campus
and the large number of applicants can allow the admission of highly
qualified students.

1.3.4. Volcano University (design arts)

Student inappropriate academic preparation was viewed as challenge by
two participants only from Volcano University. Basem (Associate Dean)
states "... students fundamentally are not prepared for university." This
led to increased efforts on the part of campus managers to work with the
government to improve school education as Basem explains "then the
follow-on challenge is you have got to devote time and resources from your

institution to working with the ministries in developing K-12 education." Ameera (Dean) concurs and states "With design or now with our visual arts program, many people do not have any idea. It is not in the K-12 system. There are no classes (at schools)." The views of Basem and Ameera are in line with what Altbach (2010a), Witte (2010a) and Lane and Kinser (2010) argue.

1.3.5. Wind University (medicine)

Three participants (Tahani, Mohamed, and Jomaa) from Wind University discussed challenges related to lack of student preparedness. Tahani (Associate Dean) describes one aspect of the challenge related to student learning by stating "That's a challenge. You have to teach a large majority of students who have studied in very classical schools where most of the teaching has been based on recall rather than analysis of information." Mohamed (Associate Dean) mentioned another aspect which is the lack of strong English language capabilities on the part of the students by stating "… you have to deal with teaching the same curriculum for a group of students whose English is their second language."

Jomaa (Dean) thinks that initially there were challenges to admit a large number of national students because of their lack of preparedness. He states "Initially in the first few years when the medical school was established, the local students, they applied and very few got in. And then of those who got in, less than 50 per cent made it from pre-medical to medical." However, it seems that the situation is currently different. When asked about the quality of students after the first few years, Jomaa clearly states "It has continued to increase." According to the 2006 annual report of Wind University, the number of enrolled students increased six-fold between 2002 and 2006. However, the actual figures are not available. This increase suggests that more qualified students are admitted which supports Jomaa's view.

The view of Tahani, Mohamed and Jomaa regarding student academic preparation is in line with the literature (Altbach, 2010a; Witte, 2010a; and Lane and Kinser, 2010).

1.3.6. The host organization

None of the participants from the host organization mentioned specific challenges related to the lack of student preparedness, perhaps because they do not deal directly with the students and are not involved in enrolment or teaching. However, Asma (Senior Specialist) explains what she thinks is the dilemma for the campuses regarding this by stating "… we pressure them not to admit nonqualified students, but we also pressure them to have a specific percentage of [national] students in the program. So I think this is tension on their side of how are (they) going to meet both requirements."

This tension was also discussed by eleven respondents from the five branch campuses who indicated that it was challenging for them to identify enough students who are academically well-prepared for the type of education offered by the campuses, especially within the citizens' community. They cannot lower their admission standards to meet the targeted number of students from this community. Altbach (2010a) and Witte (2010a) clearly raise these concerns. Altbach thinks that branch campuses may be unsustainable because of the limited pool of qualified local applicants in the host states especially when compared with the increasing number of branch campuses developed. This creates a tension that campus senior officers need to navigate.

1.3.7. Discussion

The responses of the majority of the participants from the branch campuses clearly indicate that student academic preparation is a major challenge. They cannot find enough highly qualified students to be admitted to the campus. The main areas where students lack academic

preparation are English, science, maths, critical thinking and problem solving. The only notable exception is Tornado University which seems to have enough applicants who are qualified for admission. This can be attributed to the popular Engineering programmes offered by the campus since all campuses recruit students from the same pool of high school graduates in the state.

1.4. Curriculum standards and culturally relevant values and behaviours

Although 20 out of the 21 respondents from the five campuses did not mention any challenges related to the curriculum, ten from all five campuses indicated that they made some adjustments to the curriculum. Only (Soha from Night University-Media) indicated that it was challenging to teach the home Western university curricula in the branch campus. Asma from the host organization thinks minor adjustments are need for home university curricula. Participants' responses are outlined in table 4.5 and presented below.

Table 4.5: Teaching the curriculum of the home university in the branch

Campus View	Cloud (3)	Night (4)	Tornado (5)	Volcano (5)	Wind (4)	Host (4)
Curriculum challenging	-	Soha	-	-	-	Asma

1.4.1. Cloud University (business, computer science and information systems)

All three participants from Cloud University do not see any challenges related to the curriculum although they admit that their faculty needed to adjust some aspects of it to fit the students' cultural norms and values.

For example, in his response to whether there were any challenges related to the curriculum Magdy (Associate Dean) clearly states "No. I mean, ... you have to make sure that your faculty are familiar with the different cultural norms and the cultural backgrounds of the students. I think people (faculty) can figure these things out very, very easily. They're quite good at it." Gameela (Assistant Dean) echoes the same response by stating

> We have to be mindful that our learner is very diverse and a very different learner. In doing that, we then think, okay, 'how do we design a programme that develops our students' leadership capability, our students' understanding of the world, whatever it is?' So yeah, it's not difficult. It's challenging in a very good way. For us, it's a lot of just wonderful work.

Clearly these views refute the theory of Edwards (2007), Wang (2008) and Smith (2009) regarding the implications of teaching curricula developed in Western universities to students in other cultures and the need to adjust the curricula to avoid clashing with the students' cultural norms and values. The Participants' responses clearly support the views of Altbach (2007) and Knight (2013) regarding teaching the home university curricula in the branch.

1.4.2. Night University (communication and journalism)

All participants from Night University, with the exception of Soha, do not see challenges related to the curriculum although they indicate that they made changes to the materials used to teach the curricula. For example, Darwish (Chief Operations Officer) thinks that adjusting the curriculum is a standard part of doing business at universities. He states

> There is sense to fit the context, so we do actively look at our curriculum. And we say 'what can we leverage from the region?' So if you teach a course in journalism in the U.S. and you want to

teach a course in journalism here, it's done differently in the Middle East. ... The same thing happens on our U.S. campus. As things change, as interests change, as culture changes, programs develop to meet student needs, to meet industry needs. I think it's just a standard part of doing business in an academic institution.

He sees some benefits in this as he later elaborates "The boon it has is it creates opportunities for new research for faculty and new things to look at, and it creates more relevance to the students."

Although Refaat (Senior Associate Dean) admits that they had to make adjustments to the curriculum, he does not view this as a challenge. He states

> When we first started we realized that we were asked to come here and teach what we teach in [the home university], we realized that this was not the right thing. We came with our same syllabi and the examples don't work, you know. They are too American centric. The same clichés didn't register with people. So we've changed a whole lot, we've added a whole lot about the Arab world and about Islam to the syllabi to help a) explain things, and b) because they (students) could master them.

He later explains "We've had really no difficulties and the [host organization] for the most part it's been a good partner."

Eman (Dean and CEO) mentioned a few minor issues related to the curriculum but clearly indicates that they are not challenges. He states

> There have been book issues that don't always make it through (customs). You have to negotiate and get those out. ... I suppose there are subjects that are somewhat taboo ... you handle them

gracefully and with respect. It's been positive as much as it would be anywhere in the world. So that's not been an issue.

Soha, Associate Dean, is the only participant from Night University who thinks it was challenging to adjust the curriculum to fit the context but clearly indicates that standards of the home university were maintained. She states

> We've absolutely adjusted … some aspects of the curriculum, I don't mean in terms of the standards, it's the same rules, the same standards, the same grades but I mean in terms of things like what kind of media do you show in the classroom. The US is an extremely open society when it comes to things of sexual nature, language, so things that a US-based kid would think are normal a [host state]-based kid would be like "eeh! What did you just show me? Is that a man and a woman kissing?" So we've had to make adjustments like that which have been very challenging because sometimes some of the curriculum needs a piece of media that has that in it because it comes from a US or a Western background so you can't show it; so some of those things.

Although all participants with the exception of Soha do not think that adjusting the curricula is challenging, their responses regarding the adjustment of the materials and examples used to teach the curricula clearly reflect the theories of Edwards (2007), Wang (2008), and Smith (2009).

1.4.3. Tornado University (engineering)

Only one respondent (Mansour, Dean and CEO) from Tornado University mentioned that adjustments were made to the curriculum but did not view this as a challenge. He states

The curriculum that we have here is the same as the curricula that we have in [the home university]. We've made a few changes; one example would be in chemical engineering. In [the home university], the students are required to take some courses in the life sciences, and the thinking there is that although a lot of people would think of a chemical engineer as somebody that would be going to work at a refinery or GTL plant ... a lot of chemical engineers also go to work for food companies or pharmaceutical companies. And so, it's good for those students in [the home university] to have some life sciences background. Here, that need for knowledge and life sciences is not as great, and so we don't require our students to take biology.

The other four participants from Tornado University did not report any challenges with teaching the curriculum of the home university in the branch nor did they report adjustments to the curriculum. For example, Hani (Associate Dean) states "the syllabi are the exact syllabi. We don't deviate from the syllabi. They are the same syllabi that people use in [the home university]" Coheir (Assistant Dean) concurs. When asked about things that have been imported from the home university she clearly states "well, curriculum would be the number one thing."

Clearly the curricula used to teach the Engineering programmes at Tornado University are the exact curricula used in the home university according to the participants' responses. This refutes the theories of Edwards (2007), Wang (2008) and Smith (2009) which call for adjusting the curricula taught in branch campuses to respect the local culture in the host state. The responses of Tornado University officials are in line with the theories of Altbach (2007) and Night (2013) which call for standardising the curricula in the branch campus with those in the home university.

However, it is important to note that courses taught in Engineering programmes are more in the natural science than social science areas. Maths, science, chemistry, and other relevant courses are somewhat universal and do not include material related to a specific context. Therefore, no adjustments were necessary. However, programme design seems to have responded to some local requirements as the Chemical Engineering programme is designed slightly different in the branch campus than in the home university. However, this is a response to the labour market needs as opposed to cultural needs.

1.4.4. Volcano University (design arts)

Although Basem (Associate Dean) admits that aspects of the curriculum needed to be adjusted to fit the local culture, he views this positively. He states

> We come here willingly, and so we're always kind of balancing … this curriculum in the U.S. which is built on the notion of academic freedom which simply says that teachers can teach any way they want with any materials they want. Well, you can't do that here. … I probably need a different mechanism, a different tool, a different approach, a different way of getting at what it is I'm trying to deliver.

He gives the following example to explain his view

> So if I'm teaching students a course on film, I'm probably going to show different films here than I would in the U.S. But I'm still obligated to deliver on the same learning objectives in that course. So the challenge is actually a very positive one in my view because I might have been teaching the same thing for 15 years and then I come here and I think, well, wait a minute, I need a different textbook. I need a different set of materials. I need a different vocabulary, a different world view.

None of the other participants from Volcano University reported any challenges with regards to the curriculum.

The adjustments explained by Basem, though not considered challenging by him, are in line with what the literature suggests (Edwards, 2007; Wang, 2008; Smith, 2009). Teaching social science courses such as journalism and media developed in one culture to students in a different cultural context requires adjustments to avoid clashes with the students' cultural norms, especially as the materials used can be context-specific and not appropriate in different contexts.

1.4.5. Wind University (medicine)

The curriculum was discussed by two Associate Deans from Wind University (Tahani and Mohamed). Both indicated that they follow the same curriculum as the home university but Mohamed mentioned some minor adjustments. Tahani clearly states "… we have the same curriculum exactly as in [the home university]" Mohamed concurs and adds that "the curriculum is the same but examples that faculty use in class should be anchored in the local context so the students can relate to them. We try to take advantage of the local culture in this respect and link what we teach to local issues." The other two participants from Wind University (Jomaa, Dean and Bairam, Associate Dean) did not report any challenges related to the curriculum.

Even though different examples were used to teach the curricula of the home university so students can relate to them, the same curricula of the home university is taught in the branch. This supports the literature that calls for maintain home university standards and curricula in the branch campuses (Altbach, 2007; Knight, 2013).

1.4.6.The host organization

The two respondents from the host organization who discussed issues related to the curriculum are Saeed and Asma. Saeed (Project Manager) highlights the standardization of the curriculum with the home universities by stating "They (branch campuses) teach the way they teach in their home university; they use the same materials or curriculum … we don't interfere." Asma (Senior Specialist) agrees, however, she thinks that campus senior officers need to adjust things in the curriculum that do not fit the local culture and society. She states

> They (branch campuses) have to be accommodating to the culture and the society that they're moving into. The program also has to reflect the local culture. I mean there were courses that were taught here before. I know there was a class, for example, that caused a huge problem called the 'Problem of God' … But I think just rephrasing what you're trying to say in a way that is not offensive to others in the community that you're in will help students.

The other two participants from the host organization (Kamal, Vice President, and Diba, Associate Vice president) did not report any challenges that branch campuses have regarding teaching the home university curriculum.

The perspectives of Saeed and Asma reflect the two opposing views debated in the literature. Saeed's perspective is in line with the literature that supports maintaining the home university curricula in the branch (Altbach, 2007; Knight, 2013) whereas Asma's perspective is in line with the call for adjusting the curriculum for students in other cultural contexts (Edwards, 2007; Wang, 2008; Smith, 2009).

1.4.7.Discussion

Adjusting the curriculum taught at the branch campuses represents a challenge for one only participant from the branch campuses (Soha at Night University-Media and Communication). Other participants did not report any issues related to the curriculum they teach even though some of them have made adjustments to the curriculum. According to Edwards (2007) and Wang (2008) there will be implications for teaching a curriculum that was developed in a Western country in another context without proper adjustments. However, the views of most respondents indicate otherwise.

The challenge raised by Soha at Night University can be attributed to the discipline. Media and communication can be political and controversial if the local context is ignored. Specifically, videos and other media materials that do not respect the cultural values of the students and the host country can be offensive and cause problems. This requires careful adjustment as advised by Edwards (2007) and Smith (2009). Without proper adjustment of to the local context, using media materials developed in the home Western University in a conservative Arabic society can be challenging.

1.5. Navigating the goals of the home university and those of the host state

Western universities with overseas campuses ensure that their quality standards are maintained in their branches. In the meantime, host states aim to develop knowledge-based economies by providing quality education to their citizens that does not disrupt the fabric of the society or create cultural concerns. However, establishing branch campuses of Western universities in a different cultural context may create tensions which campus senior officers need to navigate. The participants from the branch

campuses reported diverse issues related to navigating the tensions created by these conflicting goals.

1.5.1. Cloud University (business, computer science and information technology)

Two participants from Cloud University discussed the difficulties in navigating these tensions. Gameela (Assistant Dean) discussed the diversity of students on campus and how challenging it is to navigate the needs of conservative students and the more liberal ones. She states

> We have like 40-something nationalities on campus. Having all those people with different worldviews and different attitudes, and I'm not talking just about nationalities. I'm talking worldviews from the very conservative to the more liberal, having them live together, work together, respect one another, and thrive, and do well. Not just work together but really succeed and celebrate it. That I think is another big challenge…

Along the same lines Rami (Associate Dean) discusses the same challenge. He states "So that's a challenge and we really wrestled with it. The Dean and I realized that every year the freshmen girls, there's a group of conservative freshmen girls who are very uncomfortable. They just wanted us to put in a dress code and a bunch of behaviour restrictions."

1.5.2. Night University (media and communication)

Two respondents from Night University had similar views as those from Cloud University. Speaking broadly about navigating the local laws and cultural norms Eman (Dean and CEO) states

> The Middle East is different than other areas of the world, so we relate to that. There's something about what you navigate. Everybody who comes here, as you know, agrees to abide by the laws and cultural norms of the [host state]. We have to know what

those are, and people agree before they know. We need to know what the code says and their likely enforcement so that we can navigate as we would anywhere else.

Soha (Associate Dean) discusses navigating the local culture more specifically by raising a number of issues. First, she discusses cultural clashes and adaptations by stating "… and you have to deal with the cultural clashes and adaptation and those types of things." More specifically, she explains how she navigated one aspect of the local culture by stating "So for me, for example, I wear more conservative clothing here than I do in the US. Why? Because I don't want to distract the students. I understand this from their cultural background and it doesn't matter to me."

1.5.3. Tornado University (engineering)

The only issue raised at Tornado University regarding navigating the tensions between local cultural norms and the standards of the home Western university was related to institutional ethos. Cohier (Assistant Dean) explains this by stating "So, we work really hard to create an institutional ethos that replicates what happens on the main campus, but in doing that, we're respectful of the culture and the traditions. We don't have Christmas celebrations here, and they would do" She later affirms "We respect the local customs and predominant culture …"

1.5.4. Volcano University (design arts)

Navigating the local cultural values and norms while maintaining the quality standards of the home Western university seems to be a major issue at Volcano University. All five respondents expressed concerns about this that relate to the campus being an Arts school in an Arab Islamic cultural context.

Verna (Assistant Dean) states "In fact, being in [the host state] … infiltrates everything that we do and don't do. The way we plan events, the way we plan speeches, the way we plan any interaction, the type of food, everything. Everything is influenced by being here and knowing what the direction is." Jassim (Associate Dean) clarifies the difficulty of navigating the local culture by giving the following example

> Last year we had a visiting student from Mexico. … She was an intern here and finished her degree in [the home campus]. She came and she painted a mural upstairs. It was viewable and public. Anybody who walked in the main entrance … would've been able to see it. It had a couple of images in there that some of our students found offensive and it provoked a very strong reaction.

Bassem (Associate Dean) supported the view of Verna and Jassim. He focused on navigating the tensions in teaching arts in the local cultural context

> So particularly … there are aspects of modern art that might strive to challenge people's values or morals or take a political stance. It can be very political, the art. That's not going to work. So how do I teach those subjects in a way that other people won't find offensive? I think that's a hard thing.

Bassem further explains how art can be provocative unlike science or other subjects. He states

> I think our faculty, in particular, are always very sensitive about the kinds of projects that they're giving to students in the classroom. They're sensitive about the subject. If I'm counting yeast in a Petri dish, there's not a lot that somebody can really object to. There's no cultural change. There's no challenge to my values. It's not going to end up on the headline of a newspaper. Now, if I make a painting or

I write an essay or I write a poem which could be interpreted as offensive, that's a different category.

Ameera (Dean) supports the view of Verna, Jasim and Basem by explaining how faculty in her campus navigate the local demands. She states

So it was a transformation over time for our faculty to move into that type of understanding of their work and what that could mean for them and how their research fits here or doesn't fit here or how they conceptualize their own sense of their practice in this context. So we've been developing that now for six years.

Ghalib (Associate Dean) focuses on navigating the development taking place in the host state and the uncertainty associated with it. He states "... Because some things happen really fast, and other things don't. And really trying to figure out and navigate which ones are they that happen fast and which ones don't"

Although there are common challenges among the campuses with regards to the lack of student academic preparedness as discussed in section 3 and other context-related challenges, there seems to be more serious tensions at Volcano University because of the type of programme offered and the subjects taught. Programmes offered by Cloud, Tornado, and Wind universities focus on science-related subjects, whereas the programmes of Volcano University focus on art-related subjects. This can explain some of the differences between the campuses with regards to navigating the tensions created by the conflicting goals of the home Western university and the host state. Navigating these tensions can be challenging for campus senior officials.

1.5.5. Wind University (medicine)

Two respondents from Wind University highlighted the need to understand the local culture. Tahani (Associate Dean) states "The additional challenge here is to be cognizant of the culture. So I think the cultural aspect is what one needs to be cognizant about, and that's different than when you're building another branch campus in the United States." Jomaa (Dean) concurs and states "You have to understand the culture. If you don't understand, you have to be willing to learn. I mean, you come in, you are talking to another side; you got to talk. There needs to be dialogue. Dialogue means both ways."

Jomaa clearly admits that it is a challenge for branch campuses to understand and deal with issues related to the local culture while keeping the home university's standards. He states

> That's one of the challenges when you are starting something in a new culture. It (branch campus) can't be an American island. It needs to be part of that culture which means you have to assimilate what their values are. You need to find ways how those people think and then really very much address their needs while keeping your standards. That's a challenge of branch campuses.

1.5.6. Host Organization

One respondent (Asma) from the host organization emphasised the importance for branch campuses to understand the local culture and navigate cultural tensions. She succinctly states

> They (branch campuses) have to find a unique identity for them where they're going, and accept change and work with it and not resist everything that comes their way and just say 'no, we're going to do things this way.' They have to be accommodating to the culture and the society that they're moving into.

1.5.7.Discussion

Navigating the local cultural norms and values in the host state seems to create challenges for campus senior officers, especially as they try to maintain their home Western university standards. This is clearly argued in the literature by Wang (2008), Chalmers (2011) and Shams and Huisman (2012). In the case campuses this manifests itself in various aspects.

Working with students from diverse cultural backgrounds and worldviews, having them work together successfully, and dealing with cultural clashes is one aspect (Cloud and Night universities). Addressing students' cultural concerns and views towards other cultures, especially the Western culture is another aspect (Cloud, Volcano, and Wind universities). Replicating the ethos of the home university in the branch requires understanding and respecting the local culture (Tornado University). Teaching arts in a different cultural context can be provocative and might create serious tensions for campus staff and faculty (Volcano University). It is necessary for campus staff and faculty to understand the local culture and find a way to navigate the tensions created by operating in a cultural context that is different from that of the home university (the host organization).

2.   The impact of the cultural context on branch campuses

The participants expressed diverse views regarding the impact of the cultural context on their campuses. These views ranged from minor impact on a few aspects of their campuses to major impacts on all aspects. It is important to highlight that although the prevailing culture within the community of the citizens in the host state is the Arab Islamic culture, the expatriate community which represents over 80 per cent of the population is comprised of residents from different cultural backgrounds who come from different parts of the world. Below is a detailed presentation of the participants' responses relevant to the impact of the cultural context on the branch campuses.

2.1. Cloud University (Business, Computer Science & Information Systems)

Participants from Cloud University highlighted the remarkable impact of the local culture on the education their campus provides. Rami, Associate Dean, states

> There is just this deep fundamental tension between the conservative Islamic view (in the host state) and an open liberal style Western education (offered by the campus). The fundamental (characteristic) of the liberal open style education is questioning assumptions. We challenge things; nothing is sacred in terms of challenge. And there are a lot of things that in a very conservative society like [the host state] that you're not supposed to challenge. The notion of 'nothing is sacred' does need to be explored in the review of the literature, how might you do this to theorise your findings?

He further explains the cultural tension by identifying the goal of Western-style education and the impact of having students from different cultures on campus. He states

> So my point is that … we're not trying to radically reshape social norms in [the host state] … we're trying to allow open inquiry, discovery, and thoughtful discussion while respecting those norms and figuring out what those should be in what was really a very multi-cultural environment. We have students from 30 different countries in our classes.

According to Rami cultural diversity in the host state is hard to deal with. He clearly states "There were just people who drew the lines at different places, if that makes sense."

Gameela, Assistant Dean, agrees with Rami and adds that cultural diversity and the different world views of people on campus is challenging to deal with. She clearly states "I think the other challenge was … the diversity, we have 40-something nationalities on campus. Having all those people with different worldviews … from the very conservative to the more liberal, having them live together, work together, respect one another, and thrive, and do well."

The views of Cloud University officials clearly reflect the tension between the local conservative culture and the open liberal education provided by the campus (Rostron, 2009; Lane, 2011b) and the difficulty in teaching students who are used to learning in a traditional style (Dunn & Wallace, 2004; 2006). Although Cloud University offers business, computer science and information systems programmes which might not be viewed as culturally provocative, the education style adopted by the campus seems to conflict to some extent with the local culture. However, the remarkably increasing number of applicants and graduates of this campus indicates that the impact of the local culture does not seem to threaten the campus existence and growth.

2.2. **Night University** (Media and Communication)

Respondents from Night University had similar views to those of Cloud University respondents although two of them consider the cultural impact from an overall view as opposed to the impact on teaching and learning. For example, Eman, the Dean and CEO, thinks that cultural norms are sometimes difficult to deal with. She states "There are obviously norms in the country and there are cultural issues that are very different from the West. I wouldn't say I don't like them. I understand them, but they're very different and they're a challenge sometimes to work with."

Soha, Associate Dean, discusses the impact of cultural diversity on her campus, not only in terms of adapting to the various cultures but also to the clashes among them. She states "... you have to deal with the cultural clashes and adaptation and those types of things." She further elaborates and gives an example: "... there is massive cultural clashes and work styles in [the host state] really constantly. So depending on what cultural background one comes from. So for example, things like the concept of time and efficiency; very different in different cultures."

Like Rami in Cloud University, Refaat, the Senior Associate Dean of Night University, discusses a major impact of the local culture on the education offered by his campus. He thinks that teaching and doing journalism in the host state is hard given the cultural context. He clearly states "Doing journalism here is hard, there are several reasons it's hard: one is the notion of a free press is relatively foreign in this whole part of the world. And the idea that a student would go and ask questions of authority is foreign, you know. 'Why you question authority?"

Darwish, the Chief Operations Officer, is the only participant from Night University who does not see a major impact of the culture on this campus. He highlights the students' global awareness and indicates that it is as a positive aspect. He states "... even in those conservative environments,

there's still this global awareness that comes from our student body which I find pretty amazing and pretty interesting." However, he identifies an area of concern which is the lack of cultural awareness on the part of faculty and staff. He states "Everybody who comes here, as you know, agrees to abide by the laws and cultural norms of the [host state]. We have to know what those are, and people agree before they know."

The views of Eman, Soha, and Refaat are in line with what Altbach (2010b) and Issan (2013) argue regarding the impact of the local culture on branch campuses. Darwish's view supports the claim Coffman (2003) makes about the lack of resistance to Western (American) education in the GCC region. Darwish's view about the lack of cultural awareness on the part of faculty and staff is in line with what Dunn and Wallace (2006) argue in this regard. It is important to note here that Darwish is the Chief Operations Officer of Night University and his view might be limited to interaction within his area (operations and administration). He is not involved in teaching, curricula or other academic aspects of the campus. What stands out in the views of Night University respondents in what Refaat notes about the difficulty of teaching journalism in a country where questioning authority is considered culturally inappropriate. This might have an impact on this campus on the long term.

2.3. **Tornado University** (Engineering)

The cultural context does not seem to have a major impact on the education offered by Tornado University, unlike the case with Cloud and Night universities. Two respondents from Tornado University raised some minor issues in this regard that are related to replicating the home university's institutional ethos in the branch and some administrative aspects.

Coheir, Assistant Dean, indicates that they had to change some university traditions because of the local culture. She states "There're a couple of

[University] traditions that I would not import here. Like, one thing that we have, we have a mascot … it's a dog. We wouldn't do that here because dogs aren't viewed positively for many people … in this culture." Coheir also discusses the impact of the local culture on celebrations on campus. She states "We don't have Christmas celebrations here as they (students in the home university) would do … but because the predominant culture (in the US) would celebrate that. We don't do that here."

However, Coheir thinks there are not a lot of things they cannot do in the branch campus because of the local culture. She states "We respect the local customs and predominant culture … there's not really a lot that we can't do here. We tell students that the only thing that you won't get here is the crazy parties and drinking (that students get on the home university)."

Talal, Assistant Dean, highlights the impact of the local culture on operational aspects only such as holidays that affect the campus schedule. He states "We have Eid (religious celebrations) holidays here. You don't have those in the United States, so we ask for an exception to the schedule." It seems that the impact of the local culture on Tornado University campus is not major and does not affect the quality of education. It is also clear that campus senior officers are dealing with this effectively and can find ways to accommodate the requirements of the local culture. These views are clearly not in line with those of Rostron (2009, Altbach (2010b), and Issan (2013). However, the impact of the local culture on the operational aspects of Tornado University directly supports Lane's (2011b) view who argues that the local culture affects operational and administrative aspects of university branch campuses.

2.4. Volcano University (Art and design)

Four out of the five respondents from Volcano University thought the local cultural context has an impact on their campus. The respondents

mentioned a variety of issues including the impact on work style and planning, education, operations, among others. The major concern was related to the lack of clarity of what is acceptable or not acceptable in the local culture and the consequences of doing something that is not culturally acceptable.

The Dean, Ameera, thinks there is a major difference between the Western and local culture in terms of work-style and planning which impacts how she manages her campus. She states

> … my experience from North America was having an agenda, working through an agenda, coming to a point, coming to an outcome, figuring out the deliverables, delivery and end. And when I worked in [this region], I realized that was not the process. That was something I really have to learn about the art of conversation, negotiation, moving something forward that isn't sort of the American model, black and white, or the Western model, black and white. We're doing this or we're not doing this. It's not that, right? It's something else.

Jassim, Associate Dean, thinks the local culture sometimes conflicts with how they teach art and design. He states "We have different ways of looking at the world and sometimes those things come into conflict and particularly in an arts school. I mean, artists are … people who look at things in ways that can be very challenging to governments, to institutions and it's a very fine line." He further confirms that they do not want to do anything that contradicts the local culture by stating "we have to respect the customs and mores of the people. So we don't want to do anything that's directly in contradiction to those things or deliberately violates those things."

Although Jassim thinks there have not been any issues that caused damage to anyone, the potential is always there because they teach art and design in a culture of acquiescence as opposed to questioning. He explains this by stating

> Most of them (the culture-related issues) never reach the point of boiling over into something that should be cause for damage to anyone, but the potential is always there because we wouldn't be doing our jobs if we weren't teaching designers and artists to be irreverent in a certain way, irreverent in the way of questioning everything. That's the nature of art and design. And there are many aspects of this culture where the first response is to be the opposite of that; it's to be acquiescent...

Bassem, another Associate Dean, expresses a similar view and highlights the lack of clarity as regards the local culture. He states "... we never really know. It is always a feeling things have become more conservative now. Things are more open now." Bassem reports that this has led the faculty to be concerned about doing something that is considered culturally inappropriate. He clearly states

> I think the faculty were very concerned. They were afraid that if they requested a book that they felt was not objectionable but somebody in the government felt otherwise, would they lose their job? Would they be imprisoned? So there was a lot of fear around saying or doing the wrong thing that could be seen as just overstepping the (cultural) boundary. We just try to use our best judgment.

Like the other three participants from Volcano University Verna, Assistant Dean, thinks the local culture has an impact on the campus despite the modern Western façade in the host state, and that there are things they

still do not understand about the local culture even after more than 10 years. She clearly explains this by stating

> The environment here, you've got a modern Western façade. But if you scratch the surface, we are looking at a totally non-western culture. It's an Arabic culture. ... even after 10 years here, there are still communication issues .... We have controversies all the time. I think there are just some fundamental cultural differences that come up over time that are a challenge.

Verna also thinks the local culture affects everything they do and do not do in the campus. She bluntly states "In fact, being in [the host state] ... infiltrates everything that we do and don't do. The way we plan events, the way we plan speeches, the way we plan any interaction, the type of food, everything. Everything is influenced by being here and knowing what the direction is."

The views of Volcano University respondents clearly support the arguments of Rostron (2009), Altbach (2010b), Isaan (2013) regarding the impact of the local culture on branch campuses of Western universities and the difficulty of operating a campus of a Western university in a different cultural context.

Verna's statement regarding the impact of the local culture on everything they do and do not do sums up the views of respondents from her campus. The impact of the local culture on Volcano University is similar to that on Night and Cloud universities, which offer programmes in arts and social sciences, but stronger than that in Tornado University, which offers engineering programmes. The disciplines offered by the branch campuses seem to play an important role in how strong the local culture affects the campuses. Therefore, senior officers of campuses that offer social science

programmes need to be more aware of the impact of the local culture of their campuses.

2.5. **Wind University** (Medicine)

Unlike all other campuses, respondents from Wind University do not see any impact of the local culture on their campus. In fact, one of the two respondents who commented on this thinks that operating in a new culture is a positive thing and an opportunity to learn about a different culture and teach others (Gopal, 2011).

Both Jomaa, the Dean, and Tahani, Associate Dean, think it is important to understand the local culture. Jomaa states "You have to understand the culture. If you don't understand, you have to be willing to learn." Tahani agrees and underscores the importance of understanding the local culture by stating "The additional challenge here is to be cognizant of the culture. So I think the cultural aspect is what one needs to be cognizant about, and that's different than when you're building another branch campus in the United States." Tahani further explains that she thinks operating in a new cultural context is a positive thing as she clearly puts it "But I see these as actually positive challenges, not negative challenges, because the world is becoming smaller. And these are actually opportunities where we can teach other places in the world from."

The responses of these participants from Wind University clearly indicate that there is no perceived impact of the local culture on Wind University. This is not in line with what Dunn and Wallace (2006), Gopal (2011) and Altbach (2010b) think about the difficulty of operating a Western university campus in a different cultural context.

2.6. Host organization

Two respondents from the host organization think that the local culture has an impact on the campuses but they both agree that faculty and staff should understand the local culture and align their programmes and work-style to fit the local needs. Diab, Associate Vice President who is a Western expatriate, states

> In essence, one of the real challenges I think is for particularly the branches because if they are North American-based, they come in because they perceive that the [host organization] wants them and is willing to do pretty much anything to get them. Then they are not careful about the way that they understand the culture, and they are not careful about the way that they try to understand the local environment and what they need to do in order to be most effective.

He reiterates his view by clearly stating "I think that the biggest challenge which I think is actually unrecognized is understanding the culture, and then understanding how to align basically their academic programmes with what [the host state] needs."

Asmaa, Senior Specialist, who is a long-term Arab resident in the host state, thinks that campuses operate as if they are in the US despite the cultural differences between the US and the host state. She also thinks they do not align how they work with what is acceptable in the local context. She explains her view by giving the following example

> They (campus faculty and staff) do things the U.S. way. But I think in [the host state], if you are trying to reach out to a parent, there is still … greeting them, 'can I offer you a cup of tea?', and just having a conversation with them and not being so business-like. So I think it's just the differences in the cultural exchanges or just the discussion with the families.

The views of these two participants (one Western expatriate and one Arab expatriate) reflect the perceived impact of the local culture on Western branch campuses and the consequent difficulty in operating a branch campus of a Western university in a conservative environment (Issan, 2013; Altbach, 2010b; Rostron, 2009; Paige & Goode, 2009; Dunn and Wallace, 2006). Their views also support the need for campus faculty and staff to understand the local culture and adjust their academic programmes to be effective in the local context (Lane, 2011b; Dunn & Wallace, 2006) without affecting the quality or standards of their home universities.

2.7. Discussion

Although Volcano and Wind universities are the first two campuses set up in the host state and both had been operating for over ten years at the time of data collection, the views of their participants reflect much stronger impact of the local culture on Volcano University campus than on Wind University campus. The major issues reported by respondents from Cloud, Night, and Volcano universities do not seem to exist at Wind and Tornado universities.

Obviously, the programmes offered by each campus can determine whether or not the local culture will have a major impact on the campus. Teaching business, computer science, or information systems (Cloud University), art and design (Volcano University), or media (Night University) in an Arab Islamic cultural context might create tensions and challenge cultural norms, whereas teaching medicine (Wind University) or engineering (Tornado University) can be easier and not as provocative with regards to the local culture.

The impact of the local culture on branch campuses manifests itself in a number of aspects. The style of education adopted in the branch campuses is Western liberal education that encourages questioning and

challenging assumptions. However, the conservative Arab Islamic culture is characterized by acquiescence and does not accept questioning or challenging assumptions. Operations of branch campuses are also affected by the local culture such as the academic calendar that must cater for the religious holidays in the host country. Campus faculty and staff sometimes do not understand the local culture and this creates uncertainty of what is culturally acceptable and what is not. To be effective, campus faculty and staff need to understand the local context and adjust some aspects of their programmes and operations to fit the local context.

3. **How branch campus senior officers deal with the challenges they face**

In this section I present and discuss the views of participants from the branch campuses and host organization officials on how they deal with the challenges they face. These views address the five areas identified in the literature review and in the first section of this chapter: 1) societal views and acceptance of branch campuses by the local society; 2) the co-education model adopted by the campuses; 3) recruitment of local students and their ability to adapt to and succeed in a Western-style educational environment; 4) curriculum standards and culturally relevant values and behaviours; and 5) navigating the goals of the home Western university and those of the host state.

3.1. **Dealing with challenges related to families' views of the campuses**

The participants were asked to explain how they deal with the challenges related to the society's view of their campuses. All participants from the campuses mentioned intentional efforts in this regard which included one or more of the following: outreach activities, public lectures, and on-campus events.

3.1.1.**Cloud University** (business, computer science, information systems)

Cloud university participants reported on a number of outreach activities and events they held to interact with the society. For example, Gameela, Assistant Dean, states "… so most of it (interaction) has been through actual intentional outreach … and talking to people and talking to students." Gameela explains the objective of these interactions as "we needed to be very clear and supportive and reassure the parents that their children were safe here. That their children were in an environment that was not only about academic learning, but it was about growth and

development." Rami, Associate Dean, agrees with Gameela and explains how he interacts with the society to improve the image of the campus.

> I spent a lot of time ... talking to parents and talking to students. And I spent a lot of time being an emissary with the parents when they came to visit the campus. .... I spent a lot of time over the four years talking with the students and their parents in various events that we would hold. We would work actually very hard to get the parents to come and spend some time on the campus because we found that we had much stronger support from them once they have done that than when they had not come behind the gates and see what was there.

Along the same lines Magdy, Associate Dean, explains a special programme they hold to bring families to the campus. He states "We created a programme called 'Family Day'. Intentionally, we don't do that really anywhere else. We bring the families in and spend a day with us. We actually take them around the building and show them the classroom, show them the labs and have them talk to the professors."

These efforts seem to have improved the image of Cloud University in the society according to Gameela who clearly states "I think now we hear much less of that (negative views)." However, these efforts do not seem to engage all members of the society as Magdy thinks that interaction with the society in his campus is limited to specific groups and specific activities. He states "We do not interact much with the society. There is quite a gap. I mean, we only interact with the society through the students and through professional meetings." These intentional outreach activities are in line with what is highlighted in the literature as important efforts for branch campuses to improve their image in the local society (Bhanji, 2008; Witte, 2010; Redden, 2014; and Lane, 2010a).

3.1.2.Night University (communication and journalism)

Only the Dean and CEO of Night University mentioned the outreach efforts they made to reach out to the society. Eman explains the interaction of his campus senior officers with the society by stating "I try to talk to parents …. as do our senior leadership members and members of the faculty. We want to hear their concerns and their anxieties and things like that. But I get out and speak to community leaders, to people in business, government ministries …." He adds "I'm going out and systematically going to visit the heads of major companies, the ministers of government, and the chairs of the board of other organizations. I probably had maybe 60 or 70 such visits." The other participants from this campus did not mention any efforts in this regard.

Reaching out to parents and organizations by the Dean and other senior leadership members seems to be done at an individual, rather than an institutional level. No systematic institutional activities were mentioned by the Dean or other participants from this campus. Although this might help improving the image of the campus in the society, it does not represent intentional institutional efforts recommended in the literature (Bhanji, 2008; Witte, 2010a; Redden, 2014; Knight, 2013; and Lane, 2010a).

3.1.3.Tornado University (engineering)

Three participants from Tornado University explained intentional efforts to interact with the society that are similar to those of Cloud University. Hani, Associate Dean, states

> We invite the parents to come here for different reasons. We have open houses for them to come and visit. We also have some sort of social activities for parents to meet with the faculty over dinner and all these things. So we want to make sure that they understand where they are sending their kids.

Coheir, Assistant Dean, discusses details of her interaction with the families which is more direct than what Hani explained. She states "we work very hard to work with our families, make them feel welcome. All the parents have access to my phone number. We work in English and Arabic for families that parents cannot speak English."

Talal, Assistant Dean, highlights similar efforts to build relationships with the families. He states

> In our campus, we spend a lot of time; we start by going out to the high schools. We visit every school in [the host state], talk to students, and talk to families. We have many programmes where we invite students to the school throughout the year, let them know what life is like at [Tornado] University. It's really a process here of building a relationship with the families. We wanted the students to know about us and then feel comfortable with our university. So we meet with parents. We have lots of events and invite parents to. You have this relationship building.

These efforts will improve the image of Tornado University in the society as Mansour, the Dean and CEO, puts it

> I think the campuses … may not have done as much as they could have to inject the campuses and to engage the campuses in the community. I think the last couple of years everybody has done a much better job of that. But in the early years of the branch campuses' existence, I think, each of the campuses was very focused on getting themselves established, getting the operations to run, and that sort of thing. In other words, they were more inwardly focused. Now that those start-up days are behind us all, we're all looking more outwardly now and engaging high schools, we're engaging professional societies, we're hosting symposia and

conferences…, and I think we are going to see a different perspective about the campuses as a result of that.

The efforts explained by participants from this campus clearly mirror those recommended in the literature (Bhanji, 2008; Witte, 2010a; Redden, 2014; Knight, 2013; and Lane, 2010a). However, as the Dean explains, these efforts started a few years after the inception of the campus whereas Witte (2010a) recommends starting these activities before the inauguration of the campuses.

3.1.4. Volcano University (design arts)

Although the efforts described by Volcano University respondents to engage with the society are similar to those of Cloud and Tornado universities, they focused not only on improving the image of the campus in the society but also on improving the society's view of arts and design. For example, Verna, Assistant Dean, mentioned efforts that address the lack of knowledge about the discipline by stating "trying to reach out to the community and communicate to them about what design is." In doing so, Volcano University officials are trying to appeal to the community in different ways. They also organized community classes that are open to the public as a means to reach out to the society and enhance the understanding of arts. Ameera, the Dean, describes this as

> We do a lot of community classes. (We) brought in over 900 people last year in community classes. We are now doing community classes for children starting at five years and up, summer classes. In part because it is a need in the country at this moment in the country's history, but also it is a nice connection to the community.

Jassim, Associate Dean, agreed by stating "There are a lot of outreach programmes. … a lot of classes that are offered here for people in the community … there's a summer programme for little children to get them

involved in art activities." Jassim indicates that these efforts are successful. He confirms "there's an increase in the number of people who are participating in these outreach classes."

Since awareness of arts and design in the local society was not high, the efforts of Volcano University officials focused on both engaging with the society and promoting arts and design as disciplines. This is line with what the literature suggests to branch campuses (Bhanji, 2008; Witte, 2010a; Redden, 2014; Knight, 2013; and Lane, 2010a) although in the case of Volcano University senior officers are trying to establish a positive image of the campus as well as promote the arts and design disciplines to the society which can be more challenging than promoting engineering, business or medicine.

3.1.5. Wind University (medicine)

All four participants from Wind University mentioned a number of activities to engage with the society. These activities include school visits, outreach programmes, public lectures and programmes on campus for current and prospective students and their parents. Jomaa, the Dean, clearly states "(our effort) has included outreach programmes." Tahani, Associate Dean, echoes the same response by stating "You have building capacity in terms of all of our outreach programmes, in terms of what we as a faculty and as a medical school provide to the community"

Mohamed, Associate Dean, provides more details by stating

> We do a lot of school visits and it's actually both ways. So we go and visit schools but we also invite school students to come to campus and see what it is like to study medicine at [Wind University]. We hold regular events for students and families. These events are for both outreach and recruitment purposes. We hold public lectures that are open to anyone in [the state]. We also hold events especially

for families of current and prospective students to come and see our campus and interact with our faculty and students.

Bairam mentions the same activities. He states "They (staff) have campaigns where they visit schools, they have campaigns or programmes where they invite students to come here and live a day in the academic environment." Bairam provides a comparison between community outreach now and when the campus was first established around 10 years earlier. He states "Now, it's easy. You can look at our 10 years of track record. And so it is not as much an adventure to do it today … but in the beginning it took a lot of effort from the founding Dean and the faculty that worked, to convince the community …"

The efforts described by the participants from Wind University are similar. They all focus on outreach events, school visits, and activities on campus. This is line with what Bhanji (2008), Witte (2010a), Redden (2014), Knight (2013), and Lane (2010a) recommend to branch campuses to integrate into the local societies where they operate. The comparison Bairam holds between the situation in the start-up phase and the situation now is important. It clarifies the difficulty campus faculty and staff face to integrate into the local society in the early stage given the lack of a track record in the host state.

3.1.6. The host organization

Three officials of the host organization agree that the campuses are doing a lot to be involved with the society but Kamal, Vice President, thinks they still need to do more in this regard. Saeed, a Project Manager, states "….. I give a lot of credit to the campuses for this. They work really hard to be involved in the society." Asmaa agrees "They work very well with the community." Diab, Associate Vice President, states

> To their credit, I think that the branch universities are engaging in ways that are doing early cultivations. They are going into high schools or middle schools to try to expose children basically to what does it mean to be a journalist, or what does it mean to be a computer engineer.

Kamal, Vice President who has been with the host organization for only one year at the time of data collection thinks the branch campuses should do more to interact with the society. He clearly states "The branch campuses should … try to connect more with the community and be more than just acting as a satellite of a foreign institution."

Engagement with the society is not only done by the branch campuses. The host organization also makes efforts in this regard. Asmaa describes the outreach and engagement efforts the host organization does to support the campuses as "A lot of work with the community where we visited the schools in person and we take some of our students to go and speak. We take some of the parents to go and speak to other parents." She adds "So we have used a lot of parents of our current students and alumni to either do like small gatherings or we purposely do interviews in the newspaper and have people talk about their children and what it is like for them here."

These efforts are in line with what Redden (2014), Knight (2013), Lane (2010a), Bhanji (2008), and Witte (2010a) call for. They argue that campus leaders and faculty should interact and integrate with the local society to improve their image, avoid alienation and enhance their role in the local society.

3.1.7.Discussion

The participants from the five campuses and the host organization have reported similar approaches to improving their image in the society. Most of them have reached out to one or more segments of the society including prospective students, parents, government organizations and the public at large. These efforts were intentional and made at an institutional level in all campuses with the exception of Night University where efforts reported are made more at the individual than the institutional level.

3.2. Dealing with challenges related to co-education

I asked the participants to explain how they handle challenges related to the co-education model of their campuses. The responses included several similarities and some differences.

3.2.1.Cloud University (business, computer science, information systems)

Respondents from Cloud University indicated that they have realised the gender sensitivity early on and handled them proactively. Gameela, Assistant Dean, explains this by stating "when we go to the schools (for student recruitment events) we say this is a co-ed environment. You will be working with women, with men." Gameela goes on to explain her institution's approach to handling co-education and other student-related issues. She states

> There have not been (co-ed issues) because we are really, really very proactive about tackling them. For example, for first years because that's a tough transition time, professors know to let students organize their groups because we do a lot of group work... So all of that requires students to work together, but we're very mindful in the first year never to force anyone to pre-assigned groups.

Cloud University campus has formed what Magdy, Associate Dean, describes as a "top notch" student affairs team to handle student issues.

> They (student affairs team) create the proper interaction. They create the proper platforms for the students to discuss these things and to figure out how to overcome certain difficulties so that they are working within a comfortable zone. And they take into account what the girls need and offer them like private space to study, private space to hang out.

This reveals that Cloud University adopted a proactive institutional approach to handling co-ed challenges as opposed to a reactive approach to individual incidents. Gameela adds that they follow the same approach when students are on trips. She points out "They go in male and female groups …. But we send a male chaperon and female chaperon and obviously, the lodgings are certainly segregated." Since some families do not allow their daughters to go on service learning trips out of the country, Magdy explains how they addressed this by stating "We do a lot of service around the world, and we have a small number of our women who are conservative and won't travel. Their parents won't let them. So what we've done is we've developed a programme called service but in [the host state]."

Rami, Associate Dean, confirms that they adopted an institutional approach to handling co-ed challenges which he thinks is effective. He states "What we found was the most effective way to deal with this (co-ed challenges) was to get the freshmen girls, who were up in arms about it when they came in, to talk to the juniors and the seniors that had been there for a while."

The efforts of Tornado University officials to proactively address students' co-ed concerns are in line with what is recommended in the literature by

Lane (2011b) and Wood (2011). The institutional approach adopted by the senior officers of this campus seem to have effectively addressed the co-ed concerns both on camps (in class) and off campus (in service learning trips).

3.2.2.Night University (communication and journalism)

At Night University campus, Refaat, the Senior Associate Dean, does not do anything related to co-education in his campus. He confirms "No, I don't think. I think the classroom just evolves rather quickly." Darwish, the Chief Operations Officer, concurs by clearly stating "We have not really had gender-related issues that I would say are unique."

Eman, the Dean and CEO, agrees by stating "No. They (the students) are very comfortable because they've made a choice to come here." However, he explains some measures his campus took to alleviate the concerns of students in general. He states "I think we were conscious of the fact that this was new to a lot of people. In freshman orientation, these issues are talked about and students' comfort level with this." He further adds "We have a health and wellness counsellor who's available to work with anybody who has some discomfort levels or worries about it."

Soha, Associate Dean, describes how, in the early years of this campus, they proactively handled co-ed issues. She states "When we established ourselves here we coached our faculty that when they are talking to a female student, and they are male, not to close the office door, not to sit close so people walk by and see that there is a desk between the professor and the student." It seems that these efforts were successful as currently participants indicate that they do not need to do a lot in this regard. It is important to note that Night University is the latest campus established among the five case campuses. Faculty and staff of this campus might

have benefited from the experience of their counterparts in other campuses.

Although there are no challenges related to co-education at Night University, campus officials discussed co-education in freshman orientation and trained faculty and staff on relevant issues. This is in line with what Dunn and Wallace (2006), Ziguras (2008), and Cai and Hall (2016) call for.

3.2.3. Tornado University (engineering)

Four participants from Tornado University expressed similar views to those from Night University. For example, Talal, Assistant Dean, responds to the question about whether they do anything to address any co-ed challenges by stating "Not really. I think you just got to let it take care of itself." Coheir, another Assistant Dean, echoes the same response "No, I don't do anything." Hani, Associate Dean, clearly states "gender … has never been a problem."

Mansour, the Dean and CEO, agrees and explains how they got to this point by describing what happened in the early years of his campus by stating

> And what the administration did at that time, I thought was very smart, they pointed out (to students and parents) that when a student graduates from the engineering programme and becomes a practicing engineer, the company that they work for is going to expect them to be able to work with people from all cultures, from all countries, from different genders and so forth. And so this was all just part of an education process to becoming an engineer, and I think they've accepted that. It's no longer an issue here.

Jawaher, Chief Operating Officer, is the only participant from this campus who declined to answer this question. She indicates that she is not

involved in issues related to student gender and would not share a view based on hearsay. The views of the four participants of Tornado University reveal that gender does not currently represent a challenge in this campus. Therefore, senior officials do not need to do anything in this regard although they have educated students about this in the early years of the campus.

Although Tornado University officials do not see any challenges related to co-education and, consequently, do not see a need to do anything related to this aspect of education, campus senior officers in the early years discussed co-ed issues with the students and convinced them that having co-education is good training for them before moving to the workplace. This is line with what Dunn and Wallace (2006), Ziguras (2008), and Cai and Hall (2016) call for even though they focus on training faculty and staff. The same thing can apply to students.

3.2.4.Volcano University (design arts)

Respondents from Volcano University indicated that they only needed to have some procedures in place to ensure the safety and security of their students since they did not have issues with co-education in their campus. For example, Jassim, Associate Dean, states "I haven't been asked in my role to intercede in any way to address gender issues. So there've been no major breaches of conduct or anything like that that seemed to have stemmed from gender in the sense of being a chronic situation"

Ghalib, an Associate Dean, and Verna, an Assistant Dean, both highlighted the chaperoning of students during trips. Ghalib states "If there are girls going, there have to be female chaperones that go." And Verna echoes the same view by stating "Most of our trips are fully chaperoned." On campus "We did a lot of security stuff like this - cameras

all around in many of our rooms. And we informed parents about that" Verna explains.

The participants' responses clearly reveal that since there are no major gender issues at Volcano University campus, senior officers did not need to do much about this and only provided what ensures the safety and security of students on campus and while on trips.

3.2.5. Wind University (medicine)

At Wind University respondents indicated that they did not need to do anything specific regarding co-education since there are no co-ed issues within the campus. For example, Mohamed, Associate Dean, confirms "We just go on with the classes because we know that it is only a few days or a week till students get used to working together." The other participants from Wind University did not discuss any strategies to deal with co-ed issues since they do not see that co-education is a challenge in their campus as Bairam, Associate Dean, puts it "I don't think that gender is playing a role in this particular campus." Jomaa, the Dean, concurs and states "I would say during the last four years that I took over, that (co-education) has never been an issue."

The participants' responses of Wind University reveal that the situation in this campus is similar to that in Volcano University. Participants from both campuses clearly indicate that they do not need to do anything specific about co-education as it does not represent a challenge for them.

3.2.6. The host organization

Officials from the host organization had similar views to those of campus officers. For example, Kamal, Vice President, indicated that the host organization does not do anything about co-education because "the students eventually will figure out a kind of acceptable level and way of interaction with the other gender." It is important to note that Kamal has

only been with the host organization for less than a year at the time of the interview and might not be aware of efforts his organization or the campuses are doing in this regard.

On the other hand, Asma, a Senior Specialist who has been with the host organization for a long time, indicates that branch campuses "… do a lot of work in terms of trying to get the boys and the girls to work together …" She adds that these efforts have been successful by stating "It has helped a lot with the students." However, she did not mention any efforts made by the host organization in this regard.

Saeed, a Project Manager, thinks that the host organization also plays a role in addressing the co-education challenge. He states "the [foundation programme offered by the host organization], encouraged male and female students to work together. In (this programme) they (students) work together, they (faculty) encourage working in groups and they have activities for all students together…" This seems to pave the way to some extent for the branch campuses but it is noteworthy that not all students who apply for or enrol at the branch campuses have gone through this foundation programme as it is not a requirement for admission. It is rather an opportunity for those students who need academic support to qualify for admission at one of the branch campuses.

The impact of the foundation programme explained by Saeed supports the argument made by Lane (2011b) regarding the importance of these preparation programmes. Although Lane thinks these programmes prepare students academically for admission to the campuses, they can also prepare students to work together in a mixed-gender environment.

3.2.7.Discussion:

According to the responses of the participants, co-education does not represent a major challenge for them either because they were proactive in

addressing this issue early on (Cloud, Night, Tornado, and Volcano universities) or because it has never been an issue (Wind University). Cloud University staff clarified to students, before they were enrolled, that they would be working in a co-educational environment, and campus senior officers asked faculty not to force first-year students to join pre-assigned groups in class. Similarly, Night University staff discussed the co-educational environment with the students during the freshman orientation, and campus senior officers coached their faculty on how to deal with students' co-educational concerns.

Tornado University adopted a similar proactive approach in the early years when campus officials explained to students and parents that their future employers would expect them to work in mixed-gender groups. Therefore, attending a co-educational institution would be good preparation for their future careers. Volcano University officials provided female chaperones for the female students who go on service learning trips. These efforts have been effective in addressing students' concerns related to co-education. Wind University campus has never had any challenges related to co-education. Therefore, senior officers do not currently do anything specific regarding this issue as per their responses.

Although the host organization has created a pre-university programme that helped students bridge the gender gap (according to Saeed), the main objective of the programme is to provide academic preparation for the students who needed to improve their language, maths or study skills to meet the admission requirements of the branch campuses (Student Handbook, 2015-2016).

3.3. Dealing with challenges related to recruitment of qualified local students while maintaining the quality of the home university

Two sets of activities were discussed by participants from Cloud, Tornado, and Wind Universities. First, activities which target middle and secondary school students who might join the branch campuses upon completing secondary education. Second, efforts they make to improve students' academic standards once they are admitted to the campuses and during the first year in their programmes. Night University participants discussed their campus' efforts with prospective students but did not report any additional efforts for freshman students. Volcano University participants mentioned similar efforts with prospective students in addition to efforts at the national level.

3.3.1. Cloud University (business, computer science, information systems)

Lack of student academic preparedness is a major obstacle for Cloud University officers according to their views in section one of this chapter. When asked how they handle this challenge, they highlighted efforts directed towards both prospective students and first-year ones. Rami, Associate Dean, explains how they help students who are still at middle and secondary schools to become more admissible by the campus. He states

> We work with middle schools - 9th graders, 10th graders - trying to get them excited about what we were doing and the opportunities they would have if they came to [Cloud University]. But also trying to get them to understand they had to take the math and science courses to be able to get in and to succeed once they got here.

Rami explains the reason for doing this by stating "We realized especially that we had quite rigorous quantitative programmes and that an awful lot

of the students were really not prepared. They had not done the math and science needed to succeed in these programmes."

Magdy, Associate Dean, explains other activities that they hold on campus to improve students' standards and encourage them to apply. He states "There are workshops for math and science education. We invite high school students, we invite high school teachers, and we're also starting to invite the parents."

Gameela, Assistant Dean, explains how they design programmes to help first-year students succeed. She states "you have to build your programmes to your learner. You do not build them in isolation of who you are teaching." She further clarifies "… since year one, we have developed what we call a 'first year programme'. I have a director in charge of that essentially to scaffold the students' entry into college and prepare programmes for them."

The efforts of Cloud University senior officers and staff are in line with what is recommended in the literature. Visiting schools and working with students to improve their academic preparation for college is recommended by Lane (2011b) and Hossler et al. (1990). The maths and science workshops held on campus for students and teachers can be viewed as part of pre-university preparation (Lane, 2011b). The first-year programme organized by Cloud University is another attempt to improve the academic standards of freshman students (Lane, 2011b). However, working with school counsellors (Edmunds, 1980), participating in exhibitions and education tours (Impey & Underhill (1994), and using the word of mouth to recruit students are important recruitment tools that were not mentioned by Cloud University participants.

3.3.2.Night University (communication and journalism)

A high standard of writing in English is important for Night University given the programmes they offer. Refaat, Senior Associate Dean, clearly indicates that it is hard for them to find students who can write in this high standard. He states "We only know four or five schools from which we will likely get students who can write to our standards in English." Therefore, Refaat clarifies,

> We turn down a lot of students. A lot of students applied last year, I think, one out of six was admitted, one out of five, something like that. And a lot of them are turned down not for space reasons, they are turned down because their English isn't good enough, their writing isn't good enough.

Eman, Dean and CEO, explains how they help prospective students improve their applications, especially their essays. He states

> We have all kinds of events and presentations. We use some that are open to anybody, any school. (We discuss) 'Why you want to come to us? How to make an application? How to write the essay?' and these kinds of things which is a basic skill one needs in applying for a school.

Darwish, Chief Operations Officer, explains other activities they do to help recruit high quality students. He states "So there's a lot of time spent going into the various international schools. It's really where we're seeing the majority of our students come from." The efforts explained by Eman and Darwish seem to be successful in preparing prospective students to apply for the campus as Eman clearly puts it "The quality of the applicants in terms of test scores and writing scores and other factors is higher than it's ever been. It keeps getting better." Darwish concurs by

confirming "On an annual basis we've seen a higher quality student and more of them. So we're seeing the student quality come up."

The information sessions explained by the Dean is an effective student recruitment method recommended by Impey and Underhill (1994). The school visits explained by the Chief Operations Officer are in line with what Hossler, et al. (1990) recommend for university leaders. However, other student recruitment methods such as working with school counsellors (Edmunds, 1980) and using word of mouth (Phillips & Rasberry, 1986) are not mentioned by Night University participants.

3.3.3. Tornado University (engineering)

Campus senior officers at Tornado University reported efforts to work with prospective students both at schools and on campus, first-year students, teachers, school counsellors and principals. Jawaher, the Chief Operating Officer, explains the efforts they make to inform prospective students of requirements for admission at the campus at an early stage. She states "we are finding that maybe we are even having to reach down a little bit further (than grades 11 and 12) to make sure that the students have their English and math levels up to where they need to be to be able to get into here."

They not only work with students at schools but they also bring them to campus for interaction with enrolled students. Jawaher indicates "we're bringing the students to campus in those ages, like nine, ten and eleven, twelve. I mean, bringing them here and interfacing with the current students." Later when the students are ready to take tests before admission to the campus, campus staffs "… have a lot of effort there to be able to help them get their test grades up." Coheir and Talal, Assistant Deans, and Hani, Associate Dean, all concurred with Jawaher. Coheir confirms "We have a hugely aggressive recruitment campaign where we go into virtually every school in [the state]. We do application workshops, we

provide information about how to apply, how to complete a résumé, making sure that they're prepared and they understand about testing"

Talal states "In our campus we start by going out to the high schools. We visit every school in [the state], talk to them, talk to students, and talk to families. We have many programmes where we invite students to the school, let them know what life is like at [Tornado] University." Hani confirms "We have frequent visits to different high schools at different points. We always try to aim at students at the 10th grade, 11th grade, and even get them ready for these things. We do have open houses that we invite them to come here."

Moreover, campus faculty work with teachers of math and science at schools as indicated by Jawaher and Coheir. Jawaher states

> So, working with the math and science teachers in high schools to understand what the curriculum is that they are teaching the students and having workshops for those teachers to help them better teach their students, so that when they graduate from high school, they are better prepared to come in to [Tornado University].

Coheir concurs by stating "We also go into the high schools with our math faculty and teach the math teachers about how the transition from high school to university mathematics is and what they need to emphasize with their students."

Coheir and Hani both indicated that they also work with secondary school counsellors and principals to help them advice and prepare the students for college admission. Coheir confirms this view by stating "We also work not just with students but with the counsellors in the secondary schools" Hani clarifies

> We invite high school counsellors and the principals … to come here
> once a month to have lunch with us because the more that they
> know about engineering …, the better we are because the fact is
> that they frequently see the students. They can communicate with
> the students a lot at the personal level than we do. … That really
> worked out very nicely.

Mansour, the Dean and CEO, is the only participant from Tornado University who mentioned how they work with enrolled students to improve their skills. He states "So, we have, instead of maybe starting the student with engineering calculus, we may start the student with pre-calculus and work them up …"

The various efforts mentioned by Tornado University participants include a wide range of recruitment activities and mirror several strategies mentioned in the literature. Visits to high schools (Hossler, et al.,1990), working with school counsellors, teachers and principals (Edmunds, 1980), bringing prospective students to campus (Stanford, 1994), holding seminars on admission requirements (Impey & Underhill (1994), and working with first-year students (Lane, 2011b) are all effective student recruitment strategies.

3.3.4. Volcano University (design arts)

Participants from Volcano University campus do not provide programmes to help enrolled students. However, two of them indicated that they work with prospective students who are interested in applying to the campus. Jasim, Associate Dean, explains this effort by stating "a lot of classes that are offered here … are for those students who already have identified that they want to be in arts major, they can come and they can get classes specifically designed to help and improve their portfolios so that they are stronger when they apply." Ghalib, Associate Dean, concurs by clearly stating that the purpose of these classes is for prospective applicants to

"… get enough training so that at least they have a chance of making cut-off points in the admission's process."

Volcano University senior officers work with the government to introduce arts education in the school curricula to raise students' interest in arts at an early stage since the national curricula in the host state does not include arts education. Ameera, the Dean, states "we are now looking at the K-12 sector to try and help push in art and design education somehow into that realm" and Ghalib, Associate Dean, supports this by stating "the next step is to see if we can assist the educational institutions here …in rethinking their commitment to art education in the schools." Basem, Associate Dean, highlights the importance of this as "you have got to devote time and resources from your institution to working with the ministries in developing K-12 education."

The efforts to work with ministries to improve the K-12 school curricula are unique to Volcano University. Although other campuses work with school teachers and principals, their main objective is to educate the students about the admissions process and requirements, and raise their interest in the programmes they offer. The unique challenge for Volcano University is that government school students are not introduced to arts education at all in their pre-university education. This requires efforts beyond the usual recruitment activities. The classes offered to prospective students to improve their portfolios when they apply are similar to what Lane (2011b) reports about branch campuses in other countries.

3.3.5.Wind University (medicine)
Participants from Wind University reported a lot of efforts made to support prospective students. Tahani, Associate Dean, describes one programme by stating "… we set up this whole new programme of pipeline going deep into high schools, identifying good students, bringing them in during summer, then working with them during this foundation year … It is

working actually quite well so our numbers of local students have increased quite a bit."

Bairam and Mohamed, Associate Deans, describe related efforts. Bairam states

> They (admissions staffs) have campaigns where they visit schools, they have campaigns where they invite students to come here and live a day in the academic environment. And then we have our own students' fair, where we have a big event and each one of the faculty and department chairs will give a rendition of what his department will do.

Mohamed concurs and states "We do a lot of school visits and it's actually both ways. So we go and visit schools but we also invite school students to come to campus and see what it is like to study medicine at [Wind University]." Mohamed also describes their work with science teachers and counsellors at schools. He states

> Additionally, our faculty work with high school teachers who teach science, biology, etc. We also work with high school counsellors who help students think about higher education options. We familiarize them with the offerings at our campus and what it takes to qualify for admission to our programmes.

Wind University also offers several programmes to their new students to help them raise their academic standards. Jomaa, the Dean, is the only participant who discussed these programmes. He states

> We have done a lot during the last … three-and-a-half years, to set up certain programmes to facilitate their (students') entry into the medical school. That has included outreach programmes then a special foundation programme which focuses on English and

science and math, and then working with them … to customize studies for them. Every student, we look at what their strengths and weaknesses are and we assign them the classes where they need to be.

The wide range of efforts described by Wind University participants mirrors several strategies adopted by university senior officers in other countries as highlighted in the literature. The pipeline programme for prospective students is identified by Lane (2011b) as a strategy followed by several branch campuses. The school visits (Hossler, et al., 1990), working with school counsellors (Edmunds, 1980), inviting prospective students to come to campus (Stanford, 1994) and holding seminars (Impey & Underhill, 1994) are all effective student recruitment strategies. However, none of the participants mentioned word of mouth as a strategy for student recruitment (Phillips & Rasberry, 1986).

3.3.6.The host organization

Officials of the host organization mentioned a number of activities they do to promote the education hub and its campuses as a whole. They work with school students, parents and counsellors. According to Asma, Senior Specialist who has been with the host organization the longest of all four participants

> We started working initially … with grade 12 (students) and then we realized that that wasn't good enough. So now we actually have gone down to grade 9. In grade 9, it is fun, 'come and see [the education hub] and get a sense of what university life is like'. And then you go into grade 10 and we start talking about the essay and requirements that you need. We do free courses for TOEFL, ACT, IELTS. We do real exams.

Asmaa describes what seems to be a comprehensive approach to identifying potential strong applicants to the campuses and working with them and their parents to prepare them for admission. She states

> We have [a programme for promising students] where we actually focus on a group of high school students that have the potential to be admitted to [the education hub campuses] and we do a lot of intensive courses with them in the afternoons. We do a lot of work with their parents. And so, the universities can recruit from this pool that has been coming to campus for at least two years.

Kamal, Vice President, states "We support the branch campuses in their recruitment efforts, and especially with reaching out to the [government] schools in [the state]. So we compliment through different outreach activities, programmes that … help the students from the [government] schools have a better chance to be admitted at the branch campuses." These efforts are directed towards government school students in particular because Kamal thinks that

> Branch campuses, I believe, is not one of their priorities to recruit students from the [government] schools. Most of them identify a couple, four or five (international) schools, and think they can get students from those schools but from other schools, they think the students are under-prepared and it takes time and effort to focus on them

Asma and Kamal's views clarify that the host organization supports and complements the efforts of the branch campuses to recruit students and provide free preparatory courses and exams for the prospective students to help them become more prepared for admission by the campuses. However, the other two respondents, Diab and Saeed (Associate Vice

President and Project Manager, respectively) did not mention any efforts related to student recruitment by the host organization.

The comprehensive support provided by the host organization to complement the campuses' efforts to recruit students aligns well with the literature. The school visits (Hossler, et al., 1990) and interaction with school counsellors (Edmunds, 1980) have been identified as effective student recruitment strategies. The preparatory programme offered by the host organization is similar to what senior officers of other campuses have done according to Lane (2011b). These efforts by the host organization seem to be effective given the increased number of applicants to the branch campuses.

3.3.7. Discussion:

Information about the programmes and activities offered by Cloud, Tornado, and Wind Universities above are documented in the annual reports of the branch campuses. For example, Tornado University's annual report of 2009-2010 has the following information about the programmes offered to school students "the University offers K-12 education support to school students ... The University hosted Engineering Day for 1,400 high school students."

At Cloud University "The summer programme is a rare opportunity for rising high school juniors and seniors to spend three weeks learning what it takes to achieve success at a top American University" (Annual Report, 2009-2010). Wind University's 2009 annual report documents activities for school students as follows "During the summer [Wind University] inaugurated its summer programme, welcoming dozens of academically accomplished high school students onto the campus for a variety of classes and presentations." The annual reports of Night and Volcano universities do not include information relevant to campus activities related to student recruitment.

A review of documents related to educational opportunities offered by the host state revealed information about an academic preparation programme offered by the host organization to prepare secondary school graduates who are not qualified enough to apply to the branch campuses directly.

> The [academic preparation] programme is a premier pre-university programme established for high school graduates from [the host state] and other countries in the region. Many have enrolled at one of the universities in [the education hub], at [the national university], or at universities in the U.S or the U.K. Over 90% of our graduates are admitted to university each year.

Although this programme can be considered an opportunity for major support for prospective students who need further academic preparation, it is independent of the branch campuses and does not prepare students for admission in these campuses only. It is intended to bridge the academic gap between secondary schools and universities. This programme is among the academic preparation programmes Lane (2011b) identified as an effective way to improve the academic capabilities of prospective students to apply for branch campuses.

The data presented above highlights two main areas where campus senior officers make efforts to deal with the lack of academic preparation of their students. First, they work with school students and try to help raise their awareness of the admissions requirements at the respective campuses and sometimes bring them to the campuses for interaction with university students or for competitions and activities (Cloud, Night, Tornado and Wind universities).

Volcano University is the only campus whose participants did not report any activities done at school or on campus except for the courses offered

to prospective students to improve their art portfolios before they apply. Admission to the design arts programmes offered by this campus requires preparation by students, especially as they do not receive arts education in their secondary schools according to Ameera. Therefore, Volcano University senior officers are the only ones who work with the government to ensure that school curricula include programmes in this area.

However, officials from Cloud, Tornado and Wind University work, at the school level, with teachers to familiarize them with the levels of the subjects relevant to their programmes (English, math and science) which are required for entry into the campuses. They train teachers on how to improve their students' academic standards. These efforts have yielded positive results in terms of the increased number of student applications and the higher quality of applicants.

In these three institutions, once students are enrolled and during the first year, they receive support in improving their academic standards to enable them to be successful in their programmes. This takes the form of a first-year programme (Cloud University) and customised courses or study plans (Tornado and Wind Universities).

Officials from Tornado and Wind universities reported efforts to work with school counsellors to educate them about the requirements for admission. Tornado University senior officers also work with school principals for the same purpose. Other campuses do not seem to have similar efforts. This is a gap they should fill in their recruitment efforts.

These intentional efforts clearly reflect the move towards improving the quality of applicants to the campuses as opposed to reducing the quality of programmes offered to fit these applicants. Thus, campus officers endeavour to maintain the quality of their home universities in the branches.

3.4. Dealing with challenges related to curriculum standards and culturally relevant values and behaviours

Participants from Night, Volcano and Wind universities reported some adjustments to the curriculum they teach by using materials, examples and topics from the local context so that students can relate to them. Cloud University provided training to their faculty on the cultural background of the students so they can teach effectively. Although at Tornado University there was no adjustment to the curriculum, the programmes offered were designed differently from those in the home university. However, respondents from all campuses confirmed that they maintained the curriculum standards of their home universities.

3.4.1. Cloud University (business, computer science, information systems)

Although there are no challenges related to the curriculum at Cloud University as indicated by all three respondents in section one, Magdy, Associate Dean, highlights the importance of educating faculty about the cultural context and the cultural background of the students so faculty members can teach effectively. He states "you have to make sure that your faculty are familiar with the different cultural norms and the cultural backgrounds of the students. Otherwise, you cannot be effective." Other participants from Cloud University did not discuss any efforts to deal with challenges related to the curriculum or teaching.

Magdy's awareness of the importance of educating faculty aligns well with what Shams and Huisman (2012) and Robson (2011) call for. However, this does not seem to be a major concern at Cloud University since the curriculum and teaching in this campus are not challenging to faculty. Business, computer science and information systems to do not require adaptation as much as other disciplines such as media and arts do.

3.4.2.Night University (communication and journalism)

Respondents from Night University explained their efforts to adjust some aspects of the curriculum to fit the local context, albeit without changing the curriculum standards. For example, Darwish, Chief Operations Officer, states

> There is sense to fit the context, so we do actively look at our curriculum, our courses. And we say what can we leverage from the region? So if you teach a course in journalism in the U.S. and you want to teach a course in journalism here in [the state], it's done differently in the Middle East. You have Al-Jazeera here versus having Fox News in the U.S. Whereas, maybe the U.S. course would compare and contrast between Fox News, CBS News, ABC News or CNN. Here we contrast with Al-Jazeera and Al-Arabiya and the regional (agencies). So I think that's a simple example of looking to the region for a difference.

Refaat, Senior Associate Dean, concurs and explains how they adjusted aspects of the curriculum. He states

> When we first started we realized that we were asked to come here and teach what we teach in [the home university], we realized that this was not the right thing. We came with our same syllabi and the examples don't work, you know. They are too American centric. The same clichés didn't register with people. So we've changed a whole lot, we've added a whole lot about the Arab world and about Islam to the syllabi to help a) explain things, and b) because they (students) could master them.

Refaat further explains how they focus their teaching on topics which are related to the host state. He states "Our teaching is focused on their (students') country. Students have done a big website about diabetes and

obesity here; they have done a reporting in a website about automobile traffic issues."

Soha, Associate Dean, agrees and clearly explains how they have adjusted some aspects of the curricula to fit the local context. She states

> We've absolutely adjusted ... some aspects of the curriculum, I don't mean in terms of the standards, it's the same rules, the same standards, the same grades but I mean in terms of things like what kind of media do you show in the classroom. So we've had to make adjustments ... which have been very challenging because sometimes some of the curriculum needs a piece of media that has that (materials which are considered culturally inappropriate in the host state) in it because it comes from a US or a Western background so you can't show it.

Eman, Dean and CEO, highlights another issue related to teaching the home university curriculum in this campus. He thinks that the pace of student learning in the campus is slower than that in the home university. He also thinks that faculty should be satisfied with that. He states

> The other thing would be to understand incrementalism. When you teach here, you don't move necessarily at the same pace you would somewhere else. You have a lot of areas to overcome in classroom understandings, et cetera. You have to be satisfied with incremental learning and not just things that radically changed overnight.

The clear agreement among Darwish, Refaat and Soha clarifies the effort they make to adjust aspects of their communication and journalism curricula to be more appropriate for the local context and to be effectively taught to students. These efforts are recommended in the literature by Shams and Huisman (2012) to avoid clashing with the local cultural norms in the host state. Accepting slow and incremental learning

highlighted by Eman is another aspect of adjustment that faculty members go through when teaching in the host state. This can be achieved by educating faculty and raising their awareness on the academic competencies of local students as part of on-going training and professional development as recommended by Robson (2011).

3.4.3. Tornado University (engineering)

Mansour, Dean and CEO, is the only participant from Tornado University who indicated that some adjustments have been made to the curriculum to fit the local context. These adjustments are not in the materials used for teaching or in the teaching methods. They are at the level of programme design. He states

> I would say that the curriculum that we have here is the same as the curricula that we have in [the home university]. We've made a few changes; one example would be in chemical engineering. In [the home university], the students are required to take some courses in the life sciences, and the thinking there is that although a lot of people would think of a chemical engineer as somebody that would be going to work at a refinery or GTL (Gas To Liquids) plant or something like that, that's certainly true in [the US], but a lot of chemical engineers also go to work for food companies or pharmaceutical companies. And so, it's good for those students in [the home university] to have some life sciences background because that would prepare them for that. Here, that need for knowledge and life sciences is not as great, and so we don't require our students to take biology. That's one example of how we've adapted to the current conditions.

Although this does not seem to be a major adjustment in terms of the materials taught in the class or the teaching methods adopted by faculty members, it seems important for Tornado University to adjust the course

requirements to the local needs and job market demands. This reflects sound understanding of local conditions by Tornado University senior officers which Rumbley et al. (2012), Melville-Ross (2010) and Witte (2010) call for in the literature.

3.4.4. Volcano University (design arts)

Only Basem, Associate Dean, from Volcano University described some adjustments to the curriculum to fit the local context. He states

> We're always kind of balancing this curriculum in the U.S. which is built on the notion of academic freedom which simply says that teachers can teach any way they want with any materials they want. Well, you can't do that here. So you need to really think hard as faculty and as researchers about what it is you're trying to achieve and then take a step back from that and say 'well, I probably need a different mechanism, a different tool, a different approach, a different way of getting at what it is I'm trying to deliver'.

Basem further explains how he does this in class "So if I'm teaching students a course on film, I'm probably going to show different films here than I would in the U.S." Drama can be culturally provocative if it clashes with local cultural norms. The other four participants from this campus did not mention any efforts to adjust the curriculum since none of them indicated that they were facing challenges related to the curriculum.

The adjustment to the materials and teaching approaches explained by Basem indicate an awareness of the need to meet local demands and respect local cultural norms. This is clearly highlighted in the literature by Shams and Huisman (2012) and Robson (2011). Similar adjustments were also made by faculty in Night University who teach media. This connection is important to highlight because both campuses offer arts and social

sciences programmes which seem to require more adjustments than computer science, information systems, and engineering.

3.4.5. Wind University (medicine)

Mohamed, Associate Dean, is the only participant from Wind University who discussed minor adjustments faculty make when they teach students in the campus although he confirms that the curriculum and the way it is taught are the same as in the home university. He states

> The curriculum is the same but examples that faculty use in class should be anchored in the local context so the students can relate to them. We try to take advantage of the local culture in this respect and link what we teach to local issues. But the curriculum is the same and the way the curriculum is being taught is also the same. It's just the examples that are different.

None of the other participants from Wind University mentioned other efforts made to adjust the curriculum or teaching methods to fit the local context.

It is clear that the medical programme does not require major adjustments. However, Mohamed's response highlights his awareness of the need to use local examples and link the curriculum to local issues (Shams & Huisman, 2012). However, this does not seem to be a major effort on the part of Wind University faculty since only one participant mentioned these minor adjustments.

3.4.6. The host organization

Participants from the host organization think that the branch campuses are using their home university curricula and teach these curricula the same way as in their home universities. For example, Saeed, Project Manager, states "They teach the way they teach in their home university; they use the same materials or curriculum; they even have the same

admission standards they apply at home. We don't interfere." Kamal, Vice President, concurs by clearly stating "no one is asking them (the branch campuses) to change their standards or … lower their standards."

Although this supports the argument of Altbach (2007, 2010) regarding the need for branch campuses to teach the home university curricula in the branch, it seems that host organization officials are not aware of the adjustments that some campuses make to the materials and examples they use to teach the curricula. This can be due to the fact that host organization officials do not interfere in how the campuses teach as indicated by Saeed.

3.4.7. Discussion

According to the participants' responses in section one there are only minor challenges related to the curriculum and teaching in the branch campuses. Therefore, only minor adjustments were made to the materials and examples used to teach the media and communication curriculum in Night University and arts and design in Volcano University. Faculty in these branch campuses use materials and examples that are related to the local context and are culturally appropriate. To a lesser extent, faculty teaching medicine in Wind University use examples relevant to the context so that students can relate to them.

Tornado (engineering) and Cloud (business, computer science, and information systems) universities have not made changes to the materials or the way they teach their curricula (Altbach, 2007, 2010). It is noteworthy that these two campuses teach science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) disciplines whereas Night and Volcano universities who teach social science disciplines report adjustments to fit the local context (Rumbley et al., 2012; Shams & Huisman, 2012).

3.5. Navigating the goals of the home university and those of the host state

Providing quality education and maintaining the standards of the home university are obviously very important for branch campuses. However, in doing so, they encounter some challenges as discussed in this chapter. They try to deal with these challenges and figure out how to achieve their objectives. On the other hand, the host state has invited these reputable institutions to establish branch campuses and is providing large financial support to these campuses in order to achieve its objective of creating a knowledge economy without affecting the society's cultural values. Creating a knowledge economy is critical for the host state to move from reliance on natural resources to a diversified economy. Branch campus senior officers are navigating the goals of their home Western universities and those of the host Middle Eastern state.

All participants from the five campuses, without exception, confirmed that they support the development of the host state and all of them think that providing quality education and building capacity by educating students is directly supporting the development efforts of the host state. In the meantime, they are trying to figure out ways to deal with the challenges they encounter as a result of operating in a different cultural context than that of their home universities.

3.5.1. Cloud University (business, computer science, information systems)

All three participants from Cloud University confirm that their campus is supporting the development efforts of the host state by educating students, preparing future leaders of the country, conducting research, and aligning the campus efforts to the needs of government and industry. For example, Magdy, Associate Dean, confirms that his campus is "… making tremendous contributions to the (the national vision of the state)

whether it is in education; whether it is in research; whether it is in who we hire and how they are treated and how they participate in the community."

Gameela, Assistant Dean, agrees and indicates that "The [national vision] is very much on our mind, certainly as we develop the cadre of leaders who are going to join the workforce in [the state] and build toward that." She further indicates that they partner with government, business and industry to align the campus efforts to their needs as they educate students. Rami, Associate Dean, explains how they did this at Cloud University. He states "So we took the [national vision] and we tried very, very hard to align ourselves with that very explicitly."

Rami adds "we spent quite a bit of time going around and talking to people in a wide variety of the different ministries saying, 'We see these are your goals. How can we help you get them?" One of several examples Rami gave is "We set up quite a few training programmes, short executive training programmes that we did to help with professional development, skills development, with the employees of the various ministries."

Magdy clearly explains the importance of navigating the goals of the host state and those of the home university by stating

> What you have to understand is that if you are the leader ... of a leading U.S. institution and someone has asked you to come and open a branch campus, understanding how to operate successfully overseas and how to develop a working relationship that is not patronizing of the host while you are able to achieve your goals and you are helping them to achieve their goals is probably a big factor.

This is best achieved by understanding the local culture, the goals of the state and the processes as Magdy puts it "Branch campus leadership has to understand first the culture, and then understanding the goals of the

host, and understanding the local processes and how to function within them." Obviously, senior officers of Cloud University have done this as Gameela clarifies succinctly "our job is to deliver a [Cloud University] education. That's the end goal, but our process here has to be different."

When discussing the differences between Western liberal education and the conservative local culture, Rami explains how they navigate this by stating "it is really not an issue of 'we're trying to radically reshape social norms in [the host state]'. It was that we're trying to allow open inquiry, discovery, and thoughtful discussion while respecting those norms." Although this sounds difficult to achieve, Magdy thinks it is essential to be flexible and agile to succeed in leading a branch campus in a different cultural environment.

Cloud University senior officers mentioned intentional efforts to understand and address the needs of the host state and support the achievement of its national vision and development strategy. These efforts are in line with what is highlighted in the literature by Lane and Kinser (2011) and Rumbley et al., (2012). The direct alignment of the campus plans with the national vision of the host state, and the interaction with the relevant stakeholders are clear examples of supporting the host state.

In the meantime, Cloud University participants maintain the home campus standards as clearly and succinctly expressed by Gameela as "our job is to deliver a [Cloud University] education." This indicates that aligning the campus plans and activities to the national vision and strategy of the host state does not come at the expense of the education quality or standards of the home university unlike what Altbach (2011) and Lane and Kinser (2011) argue.

3.5.2.Night University (communication and journalism)

Participants from Night University explained how they support the achievement of the host state goals by aligning their plans to the national vision of the host state whilst respecting the local culture and maintaining the quality standards of their home university. For example, Eman, the Dean and CEO, clarifies how his campus aligns their plans with those of the host state by stating "I just did a document the other day where I cited the national vision and the research strategy repeatedly because it demonstrated what we can help them for what we are doing."

Soha, Associate Dean, clearly supports this by indicating "I think that our current leadership strongly believes in that (supporting the host state) and is working to do all sorts of things … for examples bringing speakers from the US that are in relevant areas for [the state's] development, and talk free to the public."

Another aspect of supporting the state's development goals is providing unique programmes through collaboration among the branch campuses. Darwish, the Chief Operations Officer, explains this by stating "So at the moment we are participating in conversations about how do we leverage communications with … creative arts of [Volcano University] and meld these things together into something else that can provide additional capacity and really great learning outcomes for the students that would go through a programme."

The support Night University provides to achieve the state's goals is clear in the way Refaat, Senior Associate Dean, describes it "We're partners with them (the host state) in moving this education ball forward to create this knowledge-based economy that they know they need to have …. And so we're much in this, it's kind of what we do. We're educators so we believe in a knowledge-based economy anyway."

This clear support to the host state provided by Night University senior officers is in line with the arguments of Lane and Kinser (2011), Witte (2010a), Altbach (2010), and Lane (2010). However, participants do not report any impact of this on the quality of education they offer or the standards of their home university.

3.5.3. Tornado University (engineering)

Tornado University offers engineering programmes which are highly demanded in the host state. Senior officers of the campus seem to be effective in supporting the host state without conflicting with the local culture. Mansour, the Dean and CEO, explains this succinctly in the following words "through our engineering programmes, the students are going to be much better prepared to contribute to knowledge-based economy than they would be otherwise."

As the cases of Night and Cloud universities, Tornado University respondents highlighted their efforts to align their goals with those of the host state. For example, Coheir, Assistant Dean, confirms

> We have mapped all of our strategic plans and goals to the national vision. So, everything we do, we document on our community partnerships, our interactions, our service learning, community involvement, and it is part of our strategic plan to make sure that our goals as an institution align with [the national vision], and we work really hard to do that.

This alignment with the national vision is also evident in the strategic plan document of Tornado University 2010-2015. The introduction of the plan states "[the strategic plan] has been informed by three things: [Tornado University branch campus'] mission; [Tornado home University's] global mission; and the [host state's] national vision."

At a more operational level, Coheir mentions a number of activities her campus was engaged in to support the host state including hosting a regional conference, organizing a symposium for industry partners, offering continuing education classes to the public, and supporting local and regional organizations through faculty participation in their boards and committees. Jawaher, the Chief Operating Officer, clearly describes how her campus supports the state as "We are supporting the industry. We are supporting research. We are supporting life-long learning. We are obviously supporting higher education and educating their youth."

This support does not come at the expense of respecting the local culture. Tornado University participants seem to understand that they also need to appeal to the society. Coheir, an Assistant Dean, explains how they do that by stating "So, we work very hard to work with our (students') families, make them feel welcome. We work in English and Arabic for families that parents can't speak English." They also respect the local culture when trying to create the institution's ethos. Coheir elaborates on this by stating "So, we work really hard to create an institutional ethos that replicates what happens on the main campus, but in doing that, we're respectful of the culture and the traditions."

Lane and Kinser (2011), Witte (2010a), Altbach (2010), and Lane (2010) all encourage branch campuses to support their host states. It is clear from the responses of Tornado University participants that they directly support the achievement of the host state goals. They also maintain the standards of Tornado home university in the US. The balanced approach of navigating the goals of the host state and those of the home university matches what Shams and Huisman (2012) call for. The evidence provided in the strategic plan document of Tornado University 2010-2015 clearly supports this approach.

3.5.4.Volcano University (design arts)

Like other campuses, Volcano University participants make a lot of effort to support the development of the state. They clearly understand their role and mandate to support the host state achieve its objectives. Ameera, Dean, states "The whole point of being a branch campus here is to support [the host state] 100 per cent." She further clarifies how they do this at Volcano University by stating

> We're educating local and regional people. I mean when you look at [the national vision] and building human capacity, that's what we do every day. So it's significant in terms of our education mandate. We help transition them (students) to hopefully productive roles in the community and in employment and entrepreneurship in developing their own companies.

Ghalib, Associate Dean, has the same view and clarifies that the national vision of the host state mirrors that of his home university a lot which makes navigating the goals of the host state and the home university easy. He states

> We have goals and strategies that tie back to [the national vision]. So we always want to make sure that what we're doing is tied back into [the national vision]. We have, obviously, a home campus strategy that we tie into, as well, and they mirror each other a lot, which is good.

Verna, Assistant Dean, provides an example of how they support the host state by encouraging entrepreneurship to help graduates start their own businesses. She states "We are working hard right now with the ministries of Trade and Economics to understand what are the barriers to setting up your own business, and then to try to get those barriers lowered to create entrepreneurship (for graduates)."

Another aspect of supporting the host state is collaboration with industry on projects that could benefit the state. Ameera explains this briefly in the following words "We do a lot of work, lots of projects. People come to us to collaborate on projects. Collaborating … with some companies on needs in the region, with our students and our faculty researchers on items that could benefit the country in the long term, short term."

As the senior officers of Volcano University support the host state they are also careful about respecting the local culture. For example, Basem, Associate Dean, explains how they educate their staff and faculty on the local culture and values. They brought an art historian from the region to talk with faculty and staff about the local culture. "… she came and spent a week with us talking about this very (cultural) issue. So we're trying to get as informed as we can, to be as sensitive as we can be about these (cultural) issues." Bassem states.

According to these responses, senior officers of Volcano University support the host state in achieving its goals (Lane & Kinser, 2011; Witte, 2010a; Altbach, 2010; Lane, 2010) and in doing this they are also careful about not violating the local cultural norms. Ghalib clearly indicates that campus senior officers also take the home university goals into consideration when planning for the campus (Shams & Huisman, 2012).

3.5.5.Wind University (medicine)

Wind University senior officers support the host state in a number of ways and seem to be proud of their contribution to the development of the state. Tahani, Associate Dean, states "So it is building capacity, and we are building physician capacity. But also, because there's a medical school here, there are the other two arms or two missions of the school which are research and clinical care." Jomaa, the Dean, echoes this view and adds the training opportunities they provide. He states

> … we aligned all of our strategic objectives with [the national vision].
> For example, human capital. We are producing not only physicians
> and physician-scientists, but we are training people in our labs to
> become scientists. And then we are training students who are
> interested in becoming health care leaders, so we are contributing
> that way.

Mohamed, Associate Dean, agrees with Jomaa and Tahani, and explains
how they partner with organizations to help the state achieve its
objectives. He states "

> We are here to support [the host state] achieve its goals and become
> a knowledge-based country. We clearly support clinical care with
> [the national] Medical Corporation. We work closely with the [health
> sector regulator and policy making body], (hospitals), and the
> [national] initiative. We work with all health-related entities in [the
> host state] to support the achievement of the goals set in the human
> development pillar of the [national vision].

Although Bairam, Associate Dean, admits that he does not consult the
national vision, he confirms that "some of the leadership in the college
were and are still participating (in strategy development), like for example,
our Dean is a member of a supreme council in charge of health affairs…"

Jomaa, the Dean, shares his perspective of how the campus senior officers
take the local conditions into consideration by stating "…when you are
starting something in a new culture, it cannot be an American island. It
needs to be part of that culture which means you have to assimilate what
their values are. You need to find ways how those people think and then
really very much address their needs while keeping your standards."

Like the other four campuses, Wind University senior officers clearly
support the development of the host state. They provide high quality

education, train students, conduct research, and work with relevant organizations in the host state. This strong support aligns well with the literature (Lane & Kinser, 2011; Witte, 2010a; Altbach, 2010; Lane, 2010). The Dean clearly understands the need for the campus to address the local needs while maintaining the home university standards (Shams & Huisman, 2012).

3.5.6.The host organization

All four participants from the host organization think that the branch campuses are supporting the host state in achieving its objectives. For example, Saeed, Project Manager, clearly states

> I think all of them understand the [national vision] and the [national strategy] and are trying to align their plans and goals to the goals in the vision and strategy. In our meetings we see that they refer to these documents regularly and identify areas of alignment and support. So, yes we think they support the country's efforts and contribute to many development areas. They help creating the knowledge-based economy by educating the students. And it's not normal education; it's very high quality education.

When asked whether she thinks the branch campuses are supporting the host state, Asmaa, Senior Specialist, clearly states "Definitely. It's one of their goals." Kamal's response to the same question was similar. He states

> Yes, they play a vital role, certainly, within the area of human development. Now we see they are producing quality graduates and I think they will also play a more active role in the future. In addition, of course, the creation of knowledge though the research is also a very important role.

Saeed and Kamal think that this support does not affect the education quality or standards of the home universities. Saeed states "They teach

the way they teach in their home university; they use the same materials or curriculum; they even have the same admission standards they apply at home. We don't interfere." Kamal supports this view by stating "no one is asking them to change their standards or … lower their standards."

It is clear from the responses of the host organization officials that the branch campuses support the state in achieving its objectives (Lane & Kinser, 2011; Witte, 2010a; Altbach, 2010; Lane, 2010) and creating a knowledge-based economy. Saeed and Kamal also see that this support does not conflict with the standards of the home universities. Therefore, the argument of Altbach (2011) and Lane and Kinser (2011) that branch campus engagement with the local context might happen at the expense of maintaining the home university standards and quality does not hold in the case of these campuses.

3.5.7. Discussion:

In light of the above presentation of branch campuses' efforts to support the development of the state, campus senior officers seem to be aware of the roles their universities play in supporting the state. They do this in a number of ways, such as by aligning their plans and goals to the national vision (all branch campuses); by providing expertise of their faculty to local organizations (Tornado University); or by working with government organizations to facilitate entrepreneurship for graduates (Volcano University).

A review of the annual reports of all branch campuses revealed that all campuses held public lecture series to educate the general public and stakeholders on areas related to the programmes they offer. According to the annual reports reviewed, a number of public speakers from various parts of the world came to the campuses for the period 2010-2013 and talked about topics related to science, technology, medicine, media,

business, engineering, and arts. These lectures are open to the public and are advertised inside and outside the education hub.

The support offered by the branch campuses to the host state is in line with what Witte (2010a) and Lane (2010) consider a major element in the sustainability of branch campuses established in developing countries, especially in agreements where the host state provides financial support to the branch campuses (Altbach, 2010a). Host states expect campuses to support the states' development in return for the large investments made by the states in establishing these campuses. The branch campuses have managed to maintain their home universities' quality standards while supporting their host state (Shams & Huisman, 2012).

Chapter Five: Findings, Conclusion and Recommendations

This study makes new contributions to knowledge by identifying the challenges in Western branch campuses in a GCC state and comparing some of the challenges of campuses that offer social science and arts programmes and those that offer STEM programmes. The study also sheds light on the impact of the local cultural context on the campuses, and clarifys ways to address these challenges by campus officers. Although some of these challenges can be minor and do not affect branch campuses such as the different holidays in the home university and the branch campus, others can be major and require careful and tactful treatment such as the recruitment of qualified students locally. The aim of this chapter is to present the findings, examine how these findings can be theorised to inform future polciy and practice of branch campus development, shed light on the study's new contribution to knowledge; and provide a conclusion of the thesis and recommendations.

Findings of the study:

In this section I discuss how findings of this study related to the research questions can be theorised to inform future policy and practice of successful branch campus development in the GCC region.

1.1. Families view and acceptance of branch campuses by the local society

The participants' perspectives regarding the families' views towards the branch campuses positively reflects a general acceptance of these institutions in the conservative society of the host state. This is supported by figures from the annual reports of all five campuses which show significant increases in the number of applications received and the number of students enrolled. This indicates that branch campuses of Western institutions in the GCC are not necessarily viewed as a threat to the local culture by all segments of the host state society. In this study, the evidence shows that the case campuses are acceptable by many families and some programmes are in high demand.

However, there are still some families who hold negative views of these campuses mainly because they are Western institutions, offer liberal education, and adopt a co-educational model. Campus senior officers should pay attention to addressing this issue since it might have a negative impact on the success and sustainability of the campuses. Although the campuses in this multiple case study receive strong financial support from the host state through the host organization, campuses in other states in the GCC region do not receive the same financial backing. Hence, they can be vulnerable to financial difficulties such as the cases of Michigan State University and George Mason University which closed their GCC campuses before their first cohorts of students have graduated (Lane, 2010a).

The change that happened over a number of years in the families' views towards the campuses from 'negative' and 'suspicious' in the early years to 'positive' and 'supportive' in the more recent years indicates that acceptance of Western institutions in conservative societies takes time and if campus senior officers make efforts to reach out to the families and address the needs of the society, negative views can change over time.

Senior officers and staff of the participating campuses have adopted a number of strategies to reach out to the families and improve the campuses' image in the society. According to the participants these strategies were effective in improving the image of their campuses. Therefore, when launching a new branch campus in this region, leaders and staff should adopt these strategies as early as possible, or even before the campus is officially launched (Witte, 2010), to create a positive image for their campus. These strategies include:

A. Enhancing the interaction with the society by holding outreach events on campus and inviting prospective students and their families to attend these events and interact with campus faculty and staff;

B. Asking parents of enrolled students to speak in outreach events and asking enrolled students to participate in recruitment activities. This will provide models from the society who can encourage prospective students and their parents to apply to the campuses;

C. Reaching out to government, semi-government, and private sector organizations in the host state in order to understand their employment needs and offer advisory services;

D. Demonstrating respect to religious obligations of students and avoiding events and activities that conflict with the local cultural norms such as Christmass celebrations in conservative Muslim societies; and

E. Ensuring that some or all staff members who contact prospective students and their parents can speak the local language and understand the local culture.

1.2. Adopting a co-educational model in conservative societies

Although concerns are raised in the literature about the appropriateness of adopting a co-educational model in conservative societies such as the GCC states (Witte, 2010b; Asquith, 2006), the findings of this study clearly reveal that senior officers of participating campuses do not currently perceive any challenges related to having mixed-gender classes. This is mainly due to the fact that branch campuses clearly indicate that they are co-educational institutions and, therefore, students and their families self-select when they apply to the campuses. In light of this, host governments and home universities who might be concerned about establishing co-educational branch campuses in this region can proceed with their plans but ensure that some measures are in place to address the minor gender-related issues raise by a few participants.

These issues surfaced in the early years of operation, in the first few weeks for freshman students every year, and during trips and other extra-curricular activities. In the early years of operation, campus senior

officers, faculty and staff should educate students and their families about the benefits of studying in mixed-gender classes and how this can prepare them for the work environment upon graduation. They should also have clear policies in place regarding behaviour on campus and discuss these policies with students during orientation sessions.

In the first few weeks every year, campus senior officers, faculty and staff should understand that some freshman students are sitting in mixed-gender classes for the first time and need a few weeks to adjust to this new environment. This applies to students who have attended single-gender government schools. It is important to help students adjust to the co-educational model by discussing this topic in class, allowing students to form teams when working together instead of asking them to work in pre-assigned groups, and providing private space for female students who would like to study or have discussions in female-only environments outside the classroom.

Trips and other extra-curricular activities require special attention since some participants indicated that these are the only situations when some co-educational issues arise. Campus senior officers should ensure that student affairs teams are comprised of male and female staff who can accompany students on trips to alleviate any tension related to gender. Extra-curricular activities should be organized in such a way that does not cause discomfort for students with regards to mixed-gender activities. For example, when project work is done outside the classroom, supervision should be arranged by faculty or staff.

1.3. Recruitment of local students and their ability to adapt to and succeed in a Western-style educational environment while maintain the quality of the home university

When developing policies for establishing university branch campuses host governments and home universities should clearly understand the

quality and outcomes of the local K-12 education system which is the main feeder for branch campuses and other HEIs. According to the interviews conducted in this study the majority of the participants think that many secondary school graduates, especially those who attended government schools, are not well-prepared academically for the rigorous education offered by the branch campuses. This can be a major impediment to achieving the goals of host governments and home universities. It might also have a negative impact on the sustainability of the branch campuses especially as they maintain the high standards of their home universities.

The main areas in which secondary school graduates lack academic preparation are English, math, science, problem-solving skills and critical thinking skills. According to the majority of the participants the local education system, especially in the government schools, does not underscore these areas. Therefore, many graduates of these schools cannot meet the stringent admission standards of the branch campuses. Therefore, it is necessary for host governments to consider improving the quality of education at the K-12 level before they establish branch campuses of Western universities locally. Home universities should also plan their enrolment targets and the associated faculty and staff employment in light of the expected number of applicants who might qualify for admission by the campus.

The only notable exception, according to the data presented in section one of this chapter was Tornado University which offers engineering programmes that are highly demanded by students and families in the region. Therefore, this campus receives a large number of applications which might explain their ability to identify academically strong students.

However, senior officers of this campus reported several efforts to improve the quality of applicants and freshman students so they can function in

the challenging high quality programmes offered in the branch according to the standards of the home university. These efforts should be considered and planned for by campus managers who operate in similar contexts and need to have more and better quality applicants. These efforts include working with the following groups:

1) School students by familiarizing them with the admission requirements and the levels of English, math and standardised tests required for entry into the campus. These events are held both at schools and on campus so that prospective students have an opportunity to see the campus facilities and interact with enrolled students;

2) Teachers to understand what they teach students and offering them training by the campus faculty to better teach the students and improve their standards;

3) School counsellors and principals by inviting them to the campus and educating them about the programmes offered and the academic standards and tests required of the students to qualify for admission to the campus; and

4) Freshman students by adopting a flexible approach to where the students should start maths and other subjects. A gradual approach to improving the students' standards in certain subjects can eventually help them succeed in their programes of study.

Host states should also understand the importance of these efforts and should provide support to branch campuses to achieve their targets. Educational authorities should encourage the interaction between schools and branch campuses and the visits by campus faculty and staff to schools. They should encourage the involvement of campus faculty in training school teachers. The coordination between state educational authorities, schools and branch campuses can directly benefit all three parties and improve the outcomes across all education stages in the state.

1.4. Curriculum standards and culturally relevant values and behaviours

The participating branch campuses teach the curricula of their home universities to maintain the standards and education quality in the branches. Although almost all participants from the campuses do not see challenges related to the curriculum, some adjustments were made at Night and Volcano universities where social science and arts programmes are offered. This was mainly to avoid conflict with the local cultural norms and enable the students to relate to local materials. Minor adjustments were made at Wind (Medicine) University by using examples related to the local context. Tornado University (Engineering) and Cloud University (Business, Computer Science, and Information Systems) did not make any adjustments to the materials used to teach their curricula.

This suggests that more adjustments might be required in campuses that offer social sciences and arts programmes than those offering STEM programmes. Courses taught in social science and arts disciplines might include topics that challenge beliefs of local students. Also, some materials used in the classroom to teach media, arts or other social science courses can be viewed by the students as culturally inappropriate.

Therefore, home universities planning to offer social sciences or arts programmes in their campuses overseas need to carefully review the topics and materials used to teach the curricula and ensure that they do not conflict with the cultural norms in the host country. It is also important for home universities to provide training and orientation to their faculty on how to teach Western curricula in another cultural context. They should focus on understanding how students think and learn; what students view as sacred; and how faculty can improve the students' critical thinking skills without imposing their cultural norms on the students. It might be useful to deploy faculty from the home universities

who are originally from the region where the branch campuses are, whenever possible, so that they are more aware of the students' culture and can effectively teach the curricula of the home university there.

1.5. Navigating the goals of the host state and those of the home university

Host states invite reputable universities to establish branch campuses and provide large financial support to these campuses in order to achieve the states' objectives of creating a knowledge economy. To achieve this objective branch campuses, provide programmes using curricula and education style developed in their Western home universities. It is challenging for campus senior officers and faculty to achieve these objectives and, at the same time, avoid clashes with local cultural values and norms. In the meantime, home universities require that their education quality standards are maintained in the branches and campus senior officers do not lower the standards to meet local needs (Shams & Huisman, 2012). It is necessary for the success of branch campuses that senior officers strike a balance to achieve these conflicting demands.

Navigating the goals of host states requires clear understanding and embracing of these goals. It is necessary that campus senior officers interact with senior government and industry officials to understand their priorities and goals and try to find common grounds where they can support the achievement of these goals. This can be done through various means: 1) holding regular meetings to exchange views between campus senior officers and faculty from one side and government and industry leaders from the other; 2) participating in formulating plans for these entities when possible; 3) serving on governing boards of relevant entities in the host state; 4) clearly aligning campus plans with national plans and ensuring that campus efforts directly support the achievement of national

plans; and 5) inviting key government and industry officials to attend and/or speak at events organized by the branch campuses.

Although the goals of home universities might be clear to campus management, navigating these goals requires maintaining strong relationships between officials in branch campuses and their counterparts in home universities. This can be achieved through various means: 1) ensuring regular interaction between management and staff in branch campuses and the relevant officials in home universities; 2) educating staff in home universities about the context in host countries; 3) inviting staff from home universities to spend time in branch campuses and vice versa; 4) involving home university management and faculty in adjusting curricula and materials to be taught in branch campuses; and 5) engaging the management of home universities in major events organized by government and industry organizations in host countries.

1.6. The impact of the local culture on the campuses

The impact of the local culture on branch campuses manifests itself in a number of aspects. The style of education adopted in the branch campuses is Western liberal education that encourages questioning and challenging assumptions. However, the conservative Arab Islamic culture is characterized by acquiescence and does not accept questioning or challenging assumptions. Operations of branch campuses are also affected by the local culture such as the academic calendar that must cater for the religious holidays in the host country. Campus staff and faculty sometimes do not understand the local culture which creates uncertainty of what is culturally acceptable and what is not. To be effective, campus staff and faculty need to understand the local context and adjust some aspects of their programmes and operations to fit it.

2. Conclusion

Branch campuses of world-class universities offer opportunities for developing countries by providing quality higher education locally which addresses the needs of some families who for cultural, religious or social reasons cannot send their children abroad to obtain university degrees (Willoughby, 2008). These campuses also have what Witte (2010a) calls 'the Knock-on effect' on local universities in the host countries, whether government or private, and encourage them to improve the quality of their education and start offering post-graduate programmes and research.

Challenges in university branch campuses can vary from country to country, from campus to campus, and perhaps also from hub to hub. Issues that represent challenges to branch campus senior officers in one country such as accreditation or recognition by local authorities might not exist in other countries. Therefore, any study related to branch campuses will be local to a large extent and should be viewed as such by researchers and practitioners. Another way to look at challenges in this type of higher education is by the stage of development of the campus. Some challenges appear in the start-up phase only while another set of challenges can appear later on. It might be necessary to understand these challenges and how to deal with them within the specific stage of development. This study included campuses established within a small number of years but when campuses are at different development stages and maturity levels, we need to be cautious when interpreting the findings.

3. Recommendations

In light of the conclusions above, the author draws two sets of recommendations: one for campus senior officers; and one for host country/organization officials. These recommendations are based on participants' responses to the interview questions about the challenges

they face and how they tackle them, and also on the lessons learned highlighted by the participants or identified from their responses.

3.1. Recommendations for campus senior officers

3.1.1. Although considerable efforts have been made by campus senior officers to understand and adjust to fit the local context, it is recommended that they continue to try to understand cultural norms in the local context and educate staff and faculty about these issues to avoid problems and confusion related to what is acceptable and what is not. This can be accomplished through formal education sessions and orientation programmes provided by consultants specialised in the local culture before or upon establishing the campuses.

3.1.2. It is recommended that campus senior officers continue to strengthen their relationships with the relevant officials in the host country/organization and keep open channels of communication with them through regular formal and informal meetings and discussions. This should help campus senior officers understand the goals of the host country/organization and align the campuses' priorities to achieve these goals.

3.1.3. It is also recommended that campus senior officers strengthen their relationships with relevant officials in the home university and engage them as much as possible in the decision making process. This can be achieved by inviting relevant officials from the home campuses to visit and spend time in the branch campuses.

3.1.4. The start-up phase of a branch campus is perhaps the most difficult time for senior officers. Therefore, it is recommended that they hire a strong team of faculty and staff who are agile, flexible and can adjust quickly to new situations and handle unusual

workloads and uncertainties. Clarity regarding these requirements is critical in job advertisements and interviews.

3.1.5. Since home universities require maintaining the quality standards at the branch campuses, and host countries require that campuses meet the states' goals and respect the local culture, it is recommended that campus senior officers work with the relevant officials at both ends, preferably at the Board of Governors level, to strike a balance between these sometimes conflicting requirements. This should be clearly discussed, understood, and documented in campus agreements.

3.2. Recommendations for host organization officials

3.2.1. It is recommended that host organization officials articulate their goals transparently to campus senior officers explaining the needs of the country. Unclear or false expectations of either side lead to various problems that might affect the smooth and sustainable operation of branch campuses. This can be achieved by engaging campus senior officers and faculty members who have experience in creating partnerships and aligning goals of different organizations or by hiring consultants with experience in these areas.

3.2.2. It is also recommended that officials of the host organization invest time in designing the partnership model they would like to adopt in inviting future universities to establish branch campuses locally. It is recommended that they identify lessons learned from their experiences with current campuses as well as other countries/organizations.

3.2.3. It is recommended that host organization officials ensure commitment and support of the organization/country's leaders. This can be achieved by highlighting, in regular meetings or reports, how

the branch campuses contribute in achieving the host state/organization's goals.

3.2.4. It is recommended that host organization officials work with the Ministry of Education to improve the teaching and learning at the K-12 schools to bridge the big gap between the outcomes of the school system and the admission requirements of the branch campuses. This can be achieved by inviting senior Ministry officials to serve on Joint Advisory Boards of the campuses for one or two terms.

3.2.5. It is recommended that host organization officials encourage and facilitate the creation and strengthening of mutual relationships between the branch campuses from one side and the local industry and community from the other. This can be achieved by organizing meetings and visits for industry and community leaders to engage with campus officials. Relevant industry and community members can serve on the Joint Advisory Boards of the campuses.

3.2.6. It is recommended that officials of the host organization create synergies among the various campuses and encourage collaboration and building on existing strengths among them. This can be achieved by joint planning for and implementation of activities for student recruitment, outreach to the society, and engagement with the national university.

4. Limitations of the study

Although every effort was made to ensure the rigour of this research study and the credibility of the findings, there are always limitations to any research undertaking. First, although the sample of this study represents the five participating campuses and the host organization, the range of representation within each campus is not wide. In one campus the Dean did not participate which might have affected the overall view of challenges

in this particular campus. In other campuses there was no representation from research management which might mean that challenges discussed by participants from these campuses lack comprehensiveness, and that challenges related to research were not raised. Only two senior officers from the host organization participated in the study although all senior officers who interact with the campuses were approached. Therefore, views of the host organization officials presented in this study might lack important perspectives of those who did not participate.

Second, the ethical approval provided by the University of Leicester before conducting this study dictated that the host state and organization, branch campuses, and participants remain anonymous in order to protect the participants from potential harm if their identities are disclosed. This necessitated careful presentation of the context where the study was conducted and provision of information about the participating branch campuses such as the number of students enrolled in each. This limitation also restricted the author's ability to openly discuss the reasons for and aspects of some challenges and how senior officers dealt with them. It would have been useful to provide more information about the context of the research and the participating campuses so that readers obtain a deeper understanding of the surroundings of the campuses.

Finally, this study included branch campuses within one education hub in the state and excludes other branch campuses that operate under other host organizations. This might reflect a partial view of the challenges in branch campuses in the host state since some of these challenges can be related to the host organization.

5. Further research

The research in this study was conducted in five university branch campuses in one host organization in a GCC state. Although the findings

of this study illuminate the challenges in the branch campus phenomenon in this region, it is still limited in scope. To further understand the challenges in university branch campuses, more research is needed to investigate other areas within these institutions such as governance, financing, and sustainability.

Since there are other branch campuses in the case state that are hosted by other organizations, studies exploring the challenges in these campuses can further illuminate this topic as they might reveal similar or different challenges senior officers face there. An important aspect of challenges in branch campuses that this study did not explore fully is what originates in the home university such as the lack of support from the home university for the campus.

This study revealed that some challenges such as the negative views towards the campuses by some segments of the society and the concerns about the co-educational model do not represent major issues for branch campuses anymore, especially after the campuses have successfully graduated a number of cohorts who projected a positive image of the campuses in the society. Therefore, more recent studies about these challenges are needed in order to understand the current status of challenges in university branch campuses.

Finally, although this thesis investigated the societal views of the American branch campuses in this nation state, this was done through the insights of campus senior officers and host organization officials only given the scope of the study. Therefore, further research to understand the societal views of these campuses through the insights of members of the society would be important for comparison with the findings of this thesis.

Appendices

Appendix A: **Interview Schedule**

How long have you been in this state?

Do you enjoy living here?

What do you like about this state?

1. ***How do you think prospective students and their parents view this campus?***

How did you get this impression? Why do you think so?

2. ***How do you recruit new students to your campus?***

Are these efforts yielding positive results?

Can you explain how?

How many students do you currently have in this campus?

How many male and female students do you have?

3. ***There is evidence in the literature about the difficulty in recruiting and dealing with students in co-education higher education institutions in some Middle Eastern States. Is co-education an issue for you in this campus?***

Please explain. Can you provide examples?

How do you handle this?

Can you provide an example of something you did about this issue?

Did it work? How?

4. ***The state has a high GDP per capita and its leaders are trying to modernize the society, improve public services, and build a knowledge-based economy. One way of achieving these social and economic development goals is providing quality higher education locally in the form of branch campuses.***

Is your branch campus supporting some or all of the state's efforts to achieve its goals?

Which goals are you supporting? Social development? Economic development? Other?

Can you explain how? Could you provide examples?

Are there any difficulties in this regard? Please give examples.

5.   ***The state's leadership is trying to position the state in the region as a leading one by acting as a peace mediator, a centre of knowledge and research, and an incubator of new industries.***

Do the state's efforts in this regard affect your ability to lead this campus successfully?

Please explain

Is there anything you have to do because of this?

For example, is it important that you hold or participate in regional conferences?

Is there anything you cannot do?

6.   ***How do you handle these challenges?***

Can you provide examples?

7.   ***In your opinion what else can be done to deal with these challenges?***

In your opinion, what should future leaders of existing branch campuses do?

And what should HEI and host country officials do to address/negotiate these challenges in future branch campus agreements?

Appendix B: **Invitation letter**

Dear (potential participant's name),

My name is Ahmed Baghdady. I am a Project Manager in [researcher's employer]. I am also a postgraduate student enrolled in the Doctor of Education (EdD) Program in Educational Leadership at the University of Leicester in the UK. I am interested in studying challenges that leaders of branch campuses in [state] are facing and how they are dealing with these challenges, with the aim of generating a new understanding of this issue. I have chosen this topic for my EdD dissertation and am inviting you to participate in the study.

I would like to collect viewpoints of branch campus senior leaders by holding 45-60 minute individual interviews and asking questions related to this topic. Your participation in these interviews is entirely voluntary. You can choose not to take part in the interview, skip any questions you prefer not to answer or withdraw from the research at any time without having to give reasons. Also, the views gained would be kept anonymous and information collected will be kept confidential. I hope you will take part because it is important that I get as complete a picture as possible of the challenges that you are facing. This will provide a sound understanding of the research topic and a solid foundation on which to build recommendations that might be useful for other campus leaders now and in the future.

The information collected will be treated with utmost confidentiality and will be held in a secure place throughout the study and will only be used by me to aid my understanding of the research topic. In the report, names of interviewees will not be mentioned and comments or quotes will not be

associated with specific individuals. The report will contain general findings and recommendations.

It is hoped that this study would be used for eventual academic publication in higher education and leadership journals to share any good practice with others in the field. Your contribution to this study by participating in the interviews is highly appreciated.

If you have any questions about this study, please feel free to contact me by phone at 5596-3749 or 5584-6752 or by email at amib1@le.ac.uk. When the research is completed a summary of the findings and the recommendations will be sent to you by email.

Please note that this study is not related to any research for [researcher's employer].

I'm looking forward to hearing from you soon.

Best regards,

Ahmed Baghdady

Appendix C: **Consent form**

School of Education

University of Leicester

162-166 Upper New Walk

Leicester, LE1 7QA. UK.

                                        Date:

Informed Consent Form

This form must be used if you wish to participate in this Education research.

Dear (participant's name),

As part of a research investigation, I would like to find out your views on challenges associated with leading a branch campus of a Western university in one of the Gulf States.

Any views expressed would be given in confidence, and any quotes used would be anonymised. It is important to note that you can withdraw from the research at any time. If you are willing to take part in this research, would you please sign below and return the form to me via email to amib1@le.ac.uk. If you would like to ask any questions concerning this process, please feel free to email me.

Signature: Date:

Print name:

Appendix D: Categories and sub-categories (in alphabetical order)

Category	Sub-category
Adjustment	Adjusting administrative procedures Adjusting the curriculum Cultural adjustment Faculty adjustment Staff adjustment Student adjustment Overall adjustment
Application for branch campuses	Competition in applying for branch campuses What students need to do to be qualified applicants
Balance	Balance faculty and student numbers Balance inputs and outputs
Benefits to branch campuses	Financial benefits Internationalizing the home campus Prestige
Benefits to host country or organization	Achieving development goals in national vision Developing new generations Developing research capabilities Linking alumni to labour market
Branch campus lessons learnt	Learning rom failed branch campuses Learning from other branch campuses Learning from others through networking Lesson learnt Other states or universities wanting to learn from branch campuses

Challenges	Developmental Academic Administrative Achieving branch campus mission Staffing branch campuses Cultural Gender Political Social Understanding the local context Other challenges (e.g. legal)
Dealing with challenges	Aligning campus plans to state goals Building relationships with government Buy-in from constituencies Documenting the state's history How future campus leaders deal with challenges Dealing with academic challenges Dealing with administrative challenges Dealing with cultural challenges Dealing with developmental challenges Dealing with gender challenges Dealing with other challenges Dealing with political challenges Dealing with social challenges Dealing with staffing challenges Dealing with challenges at the planning phase Dealing with challenges at the start-up phase Interaction with the society Local fit Outreach activities Understanding the context
Pressure	Pressure on branch campuses Pressure on host organization Pressure on leaders Pressure on students
Readiness to learn	Conditions of readiness to learn School academic preparation
Recruitment	Faculty recruitment Student recruitment Students' higher education decisions

Relationship with home university	Relationship with home university Communication with home university
Relationship with host organization	Relationship with the host organization
Societal view of the campuses	Brand recognition Awareness of discipline Changed view View compared to national university Conservative view Difficult to get in Disconnected from the society Negative Positive Varied Society's characteristics
Standardization with the home university	Academic standardization Standardizing campus life Standardizing the curriculum Standardizing faculty hiring Standardizing graduation requirements Standardizing institutional culture Standardizing admissions requirements
Student activities	Extra-curricular activities Study abroad and exchange activities
Student body	Student body diversity Student body increasing Student motivation Student satisfaction Enrolled and graduates students
Support to branch campuses	Supporting academic freedom Creating a scholarly community Financial support Support from home university Support from host organization
Support to host country or organization	Educating students Mapping degrees to labour market needs Offering public lectures and executive training Publicizing the host state and organization Supporting cultural and social development

Appendix E: Categories and sub-categories (pilot study)

1.   Society's view of branch campuses

1.1.   Positive by an element of the society (citizens) and expatriate community

1.2.   Negative by the conservative element of the society and might not change

1.3.   Changing view over time due to brand recognition of institutions and host country

1.4.   Lack of brand recognition of institutions by society early on

1.5.   Society is diverse

2.   Cultural context

2.1.   Cultural differences among people from different countries; impact on students

2.2.   Cultural harmony among the expatriate community; impact on students

2.3.   Cultural clash in some cases creates obstacles

2.4.   Cultural recognition has a positive impact on students

2.5.   Cultural understanding is an important success factor for branch campuses

3.   Gender issues in education

3.1.   Mixed-gender environment is not a major issue; students/parents self-select

3.2.   Male students do not seem to be affected by co-education

3.3.   Female students sometimes find it difficult to be in a co-education setting

3.4.   Gender issues in class usually arise in the first year for students

3.5.   Gender issues outside class can be problematic (e.g. housing, student trips)

4.   Student recruitment

4.1.   Low student motivation negatively impacts student recruitment

4.2.   Recruitment targets of citizens is an issue although student numbers are increasing

4.3.   Students' calibre is rather low, especially among citizens

4.4.   Academic standards must remain as high as in main campus; impact on recruitment

4.5.   Students' higher education decisions are affected by family and cultural factors

5.   Readiness to learn

5.1.   Low student motivation sometimes affects academic performance/achievement (4.1.)

5.2.   Academic preparedness varies according to K-12 schooling (low in local government schools; high in international schools)

5.3.   Language proficiency is a barrier for some students

5.4.   Students' thinking skills need development; a barrier for high achievement

5.5.   Family obligations limit some students' opportunities to fully benefit from education

6.   Adjustment to fit new environment

6.1.   Cultural adjustment necessary but takes time

6.2.   Adjusting the curriculum needed and can be done without compromising quality

6.3.   Adjusting operations procedures necessary but not a major issue

6.4.   Students adjusting takes a year or two but pays off

6.5.   Faculty/staff adjusting necessary for success; impact on faculty/staff recruitment

7.   Support and benefits

7.1.   Branch campus' support to host country/organization is primarily in providing quality education and producing high calibre graduates but goes beyond that

7.2.   Host's support to branch campus critical (financially; academically, and professionally)

7.3.   Main campus' support to branch campus needed for maintaining relationship with host

7.4.   Benefits to host country/organization: image as educational hub; achievement of goals

7.5. Benefits to main campus: financial; prestige; internationalization

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