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Qualitative study investigating Western student affairs practices in Qatar

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QUALITATIVE STUDY INVESTIGATING WESTERN STUDENT AFFAIRS PRACTICES IN QATAR

by
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Dissertation Chair: Dr. MaryBeth Walpole, Ph.D.

Dedication

To Qatar Foundation for establishing such unique global higher education opportunities of which I have been privileged to be part for the past 8 years.

To all of the student affairs practitioners, faculty members, and administrators who choose to travel across the world to support the advancement of higher education and contribute to educating students from across the globe.

Acknowledgments

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To Dr. MaryBeth Walpole, my dissertation committee chair: Thank you for challenging and inspiring me to produce this work. I appreciate your patience and understanding with the challenges that I faced during my dissertation journey.

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Abstract

Amjad O. Abdo
QUALITATIVE STUDY INVESTIGATING WESTERN
STUDENT AFFAIRS PRACTICES IN QATAR
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Doctor of Education

The internationalization movement in higher education expanded quickly in the past two decades. While efforts varied among institutions, the common and preferred approach has been creation of International Branch Campuses (IBC). Currently, there are 283 IBCs, 30% of which are located in the Middle East region.

This study explored the role of local culture context in shaping Western student affairs practices implemented at the American IBCs in the State of Qatar. A qualitative single-case study included interviews with 14 Western expatriates who were recited from the United States to work in the Student Affairs departments in Education City, Qatar. The intercultural competence framework was utilized to guide the study.

Findings revealed the influence of the local cultural context in shaping student affairs practitioners' programs and events. Participants noted that they work in a collective society, with strong families ties and influence, with significant differences between Eastern and Western cultures. They described modifications to their events and programs to make them more relevant and to meet the needs of their local students and made recommendations for transition of new student affairs staff in the Middle East.

Research findings suggest the significant role of the local Arab culture in shaping student affairs programs and initiatives differently from those in the United States.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Higher education has been increasingly engaged in efforts to internationalize (Altbach, Resiberg, & Rumbley, 2009). In the United States, colleges and universities are forging global connections in order to introduce educational programs in many forms. These collaborations are created with the following goals: diversifying the study-abroad destinations, increasing international student enrollment, developing joint degree programs with international universities, and establishing International Branch Campuses (IBCs) around the world (Altbach & Knight, 2007; Lane, 2011). These initiatives generate revenue, provide prestige, and enhance academic programs and research opportunities (Knight, 2012a). As these efforts grow rapidly in the United States, higher education institutions face new challenges related to globalization and efforts to replicate their educational services around the globe (Altbach, 2011; Calderon, 2015).

The Rising Global Demand for Higher Education

The global demand for access to higher education has been spurred by the rapid growth of the student population worldwide, which has doubled in size over the span of 20 years (van der Wende, 2003; World Bank, 2000). As of 2015, there were more than 150 million students, with projections of 660 million by 2040 (Calderon, 2015). This student population size represented 10% of the overall worldwide population in 2015, compared to 4% in 2012 (Calderon, 2015). These trends provide a clear indication that the current student population will continue to grow, leading to an increase in demand for access to higher education and a subsequent increase in student mobility worldwide

(Calderon, 2015; Connelly & Olsen, 2013; United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO], 2009; UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2013).

In the United States, the Institute of International Education (IIE) reported a 51% increase in international student enrollment from 2002 to 2014 (IIE, 2014). These data reflect the increase in student mobility and new global trends that higher education institutions will face in meeting high demands globally (Connelly & Olsen, 2013; IIE, 2014).

The Internationalization Movement

Internationalization plays a significant role in shaping the experiences of students in higher education institutions throughout the world (Knight, 2004, 2006, 2008; Altbach, 2011). *Internationalization* can be defined as the process of creating a global focus and culture in higher education institutions through establishing and delivering international initiatives and programs (Knight, 2003, 2014; Soilemetzidis, 2011). Internationalization efforts are uniquely structured to meet the interest and needs of each institution (Knight, 2014).

Internationalization can be classified in two ways: (a) internationalization inside the home country, and (b) internationalization abroad (Knight, 2004). Internationalization at home consists of strategies adopted by institutions to enhance international presence on home campuses. This may include recruiting international students, faculty, and researchers. Internationalization abroad requires institutions to venture into the world through study-abroad opportunities, IBCs, long-distance education programs, and international partnerships (Altbach, 2011; Knight, 2004; UNESCO, 2009). The establishment of IBCs is one of the most common and preferred methods for

internationalization (Cross-Border Education Research Team [C-BERT], 2017: Lane, 2011).

International Branch Campuses

The IBC is an educational facility established by a home institution in a foreign country (Altbach, 2004; Wilkins & Huisman, 2012). IBCs share structures with their home campuses by engaging in face-to-face teaching and offering the same basic services to students, faculty, and staff (Altbach, 2004; Marijk, 2003; Naidoo, 2008; Wilkins & Huisman, 2012). IBCs generally provide full academic programs that lead to degrees recognized by the home institution (Farrugia & Lane, 2013; Lane, 2011). IBCs can be fully subsidized by the host country or established as a joint venture with a local partner (Naidoo, 2008).

Since 2006, the number of IBCs around the world has increased by 43% (Becker, 2009). At the time of this writing, there were 284 IBCs, of which more than 85% were based in the United States (C-BERT, 2017). American colleges and universities are still widely considered to be best in providing standards of excellence in higher education (American Council on Education [ACE], 2011; Green, Kinser, & Eckel, 2008). As a result, the United States continues to take the lead in establishing IBCs, followed by Australia, United Kingdom, France, and India (Becker, 2009; C-BERT, 2017). American IBCs can play a significant role in meeting rising demands in the global market, especially in developing countries (Becker, 2009; C-BERT, 2017).

Several countries in the Middle East have started to offer incentives to attract IBCs to invest in building a knowledge-based economy (Romani, 2009). Some of these countries have recruited many IBCs and thereby serve as international higher education

hubs for their regions. The United Arab Emirates (UAE) serve as the main educational hub in the Middle East region; they have established Dubai International Academic City, which serves as the home of 15 IBCs (Becker, 2009; Romani, 2009). Similar to the UAE, the State of Qatar established Education City to serve as the home of six American IBCs (Vora, 2014).

Qatar's ability to serve as an educational hub was acknowledged in data generated by the UNESCO Institute of Statistics (Clark, 2013; UNESCO Institute of Statistics, 2013). For example, the State of Qatar increased its international student enrollment by 60% from 2008 to 2010, from 3,393 students to 5,387 students. These international students have contributed significantly to development of human capital in the region (Clark, 2013; UNESCO Institute of Statistics, 2013).

IBCs in the State of Qatar

The State of Qatar is a nation of 2.2 million people, located in the Arabian Peninsula; it shares a border with Saudi Arabia (Anderson, 2015). Qatar has grown from one of the poorest countries in the area to one of the wealthiest, achieving the highest-level per capita income in the world (Clark, 2013). The State of Qatar, similar to many carbon-based countries, is proactively seeking to change its dependency on oil and gas to a knowledge-based economy requiring a skilled and educated labor force (Clark, 2013; Qatar Foundation for Education, Science, and Community Development, herein Qatar Foundation [QF], 2016).

Qatar Foundation (QF) is a private nonprofit organization that aims to serve the Qatari people by promoting development in three key areas: education, science and research, and community development (QF, 2016). The Foundation "aspires to develop

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sustainable human capacity, social, and economic prosperity for a knowledge-based economy" (QF, 2016, para. 1). Education City, a QF educational initiative, was officially established in 1995 and is the home of six American IBCs in Doha, the capital city of the State of Qatar (Clark, 2013; Vora, 2014). These six American branch campuses (Texas A&M, Northwestern, Georgetown, Carnegie Mellon, Cornell, and Virginia Commonwealth) are considered some of the world's best institutions and are the main higher education providers in Qatar (Vora, 2014).

The American IBCs in Education City contribute to meeting the high demand for education in Qatar by accommodating more than 2,000 local and international students (Anderson, 2015). These IBCs provide opportunities for students who seek an American degree without the need to leave their home country or region (Anderson, 2015; Lawton & Katsomitros, 2012). This incentive is important to many students because the majority of IBCs grant degrees identical to those of their home institutions, with no branch campus distinction (Hughes, 2011). Support for this arrangement is strong among students. Ahmed Al-Qahtani, a Weill Cornell Medical student, stated, "The idea of having an Ivy League education in the comfort of your own home is great. . . . All I can say is, thank you, your highness, for everything" (Anderson, 2015, p. 1). In addition to the six American IBCs in Education City, Qatar hosts five IBCs from Canada, the United Kingdom, The Netherlands, and France in locations outside of Education City (C-BERT, 2017).

Challenges Facing IBCs

There are many concerns on the part of faculty, staff, and administrators in terms of maintaining reputations and institutional brands at these IBCs (Lawton & Katsomitros,

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2012). For example, the president of Yale stated, "You can't replicate a 300-year-old university in a remote location" (Lawton & Katsomitros, 2012, p. 27). In addition, Altbach (2001) warned that American higher education values, such as institutional independence and academic freedom, are not shared around the world and may be restricted by host government laws and policies.

On the financial side, many consider the IBC initiative to be a risky project (Chalmers, 2011; Croom, 2012). Multiple accounts of struggling IBCs have emerged, beginning with American IBC closures in Japan in 1991 and including recent closures such as those by the University of New South Wales in Singapore and George Mason University in the UAE (Becker, 2009; Lewin, 2009; Ruby, 2010; Staley, 2013). Many of these campuses fail to meet enrollment targets or to cover their own operating expenses, sometimes related to economic recessions (Becker, 2009; Diconsiglio, 2009). The IBCs in the State of Qatar receive generous financial support from QF to maintain operations in Qatar (Anderson, 2016). Everette Dennis, Dean of Northwestern University in Qatar, stated, "It was a good deal . . . with no financial risks. The only risk was reputational" (Anderson, 2015, p. 1).

IBCs can face major challenges when operating in host counties that are very different in terms of cultural values and beliefs (Diconsiglio, 2009; Lane, 2011; Vora, 2014). To be successful in their internationalization efforts, IBCs must reach a deep level of cultural understanding of and respect for their host country's culture, values, and traditions as they carry out daily operations (Altbach et al., 2009; Diconsiglio, 2009; Knight, 2004; Shams & Huisman, 2012; Stryker, Witt, & Konecny, 2016).

Learning about other cultures should focus on a genuine understanding of these cultural values, norms, and traditions (Magolda, 2003; Meyer & Rhoades, 2006). It should focus not on learning the differences but on promoting understanding and acceptance of those cultures (Magolda, 2003; Meyer & Rhoades, 2006). Diversity and inclusion issues challenge student affairs professionals who serve an increasingly diverse student population (College Student Educators International [ACPA], 2016; Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education [NASPA], 2016a, 2016b, 2016c). Student affairs professionals can significantly influence the promotion of diversity, equity, inclusion, and social justice through direct work with students (ACPA, 2016; NASPA, 2016a, 2016b, 2016c).

Student Affairs Practitioners

Student affairs practitioners play a significant role in supporting the mission and vision of their higher education institutions through services that they provide to college students (Ciobanu, 2013; Manning, Kinzie, & Schuh, 2014; UNESCO, 2002). The student services concept originated in ancient Athena's educational system and the modern model continues to be developed by student affairs educators in the United States (Ciobanu, 2013). However, because this concept is still a new phenomenon outside the United States, many non-U.S. institutions use the term *student services* instead of *student affairs* (Ciobanu, 2013; UNESCO, 2002, 2009). Student affairs or student services programs consist of divisions or departments that are designated to provide services and support to students in higher education to ensure their growth and development as they complete academic coursework in college (Ciobanu, 2013; NASPA, 2016a, 2016b, 2016c). Student affairs professionals play an important role in enhancing the overall

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quality of the educational mission through services and support systems that they establish for students (Ciobanu, 2013).

Problem Statement

As the number of IBCs continues to increase globally, demands for student affairs professionals who can efficiently support and sustain operations and services of IBCs around the world will increase. The main challenge for the student affairs professional is to function effectively with students from cultural backgrounds with which the professional may not be familiar (Otten, 2003; UNESCO, 2002). Understanding the local cultural context would help the student affairs professional to provide adequate services to students (NASPA, 2016c; UNESCO, 2002). Deficiencies in cultural understanding can impair the ability of student affairs staff to provide services and programs that meet student needs (NASPA, 2016c; UNESCO, 2002).

IBCs, as an international venture, require leaders who can navigate and operate in multiple-culture environments (Lane, 2011). Internationalization efforts such as IBCs do not lead directly to developing cross-cultural learning and understanding (Deardorff, 2016a; Otten, 2003). Therefore, student affairs professionals must take proactive measures to understand their students and the local cultural context to advocate for student needs (Ciobanu, 2013; Deardorff, 2016a; UNESCO, 2002).

The World Declaration on Higher Education adopted in the *UNESCO World Conference* highlighted the importance of developing student services globally (Blake, 2007; Ciobanu, 2013; UNESCO, 2002). In this declaration, an important call was made for higher education institutions worldwide to provide appropriate student services and programs that would enhance the quality of student life, meet the needs of students, and

support their learning, success, and achievement (Ciobanu, 2013; UNESCO, 2002). Student affairs professionals who oversee student life can play a significant role in accomplishing this task (Blake, 2007; Ciobanu, 2013; Evans, Forney, & Guido-DiBrito, 1998; Magolda, 2003; Manning et al., 2014; Schuh, Jones, Harper, & Associates, 2011; UNESCO, 2002).

Purpose of the Study

The State of Qatar, specifically Education City, was selected as the site for this study. Education City is the home of six prestigious American institutions that were selected because of their academic excellence in particular fields. Virginia Commonwealth University was the first to join, in 1998, to offer programs in fine arts, fashion design, graphic design, interior design, and painting and printmaking (QF, 2017). Next, Weill Cornell Medical Colleges joined in 2002 to offer premedical and medical studies. Georgetown and Northwestern University were invited by QF to offer academic programs in foreign service and media and opened in 2005 and 2008, respectively (Anderson, 2015; Clark, 2013). Texas A&M University was invited in 2003 to offer specific engineering programs to enhance Qatar's national resources. Carnegie Mellon University joined in 2004 to offer programs in business administration, computer science, and information systems (Carnegie Mellon University in Qatar, 2015).

The American IBCs operating in Education City share common interests and have similar agreements with QF, the official agency hosting these IBCs in the State of Qatar (Clark, 2013; Vora, 2014). The American IBCs have been operating in the State of Qatar for more than 10 years. However, it is not clear how the local cultural context influences the operations of these Western IBCs, especially in services delivered by student affairs

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practitioners.

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore how the local cultural context shaped Western student affairs practices in IBCs from the perspectives of student affairs practitioners. The case study methodology was selected due to the nature of the inquiry and the special close-knit community established in Education City in Doha. A case study approach is typically selected when the phenomenon under research is related to an individual unit or a community whose members share strong ties and common bonds (Flyvbjerg, 2011; Merriam, 1998; Stake, 2008). A case study provides tools for in-depth analysis, with multiple methods to collect and triangulate data (Flyvbjerg, 2011; Stake, 2008). Case study methodology connects to environmental factors and provides the researcher with the flexibility to establish boundaries to create the context and the case for the study (Flyvbjerg, 2011).

This study also examined whether and how student affairs staff members adjusted their practices to enhance student engagement and to support student needs. Multiple data sources were utilized, including in-depth semistructured interviews and a review of artifacts provided by the participants (Creswell, 2013; Rossman & Rallis, 2012; Stringer, 2014).

Research Questions

Three research questions guided this study:

1. How do student activities professionals describe the role of local culture in shaping Western student affairs services implemented on their branch campuses?

2. In what ways do student activities professionals alter their Western practices at IBCs in Qatar?

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3. What best practices can emerge from the study findings to guide student activities professionals working at IBCs in the Middle East Region?

Theoretical Framework

The intercultural competence framework was developed by Deardorff (2006) by inviting 23 intercultural scholars to participate in her study. The participants in Deardorff's study represented a wide range of experts from "communication, political science, education, international relations, anthropology, political science, psychology, and business" (Deardorff, 2006, p. 244). These scholars contributed significantly to the success of Deardorff's framework and made it a leading and frequently used intercultural model in higher education (Arasaratnam-Smith, 2017; Deardorff, 2012, 2016a, 2016b; Moscaritolo, Osfield, Perozzi, & Shea, 2016).

The model presented by Deardorff (2012) consists of five stages: attitudes, knowledge, skills, internal outcomes, and external outcomes. Participants move through these stages by developing a sense of curiosity and interest in exploring differences by challenging their personal beliefs. In the advanced stages, participants develop intercultural skills to control their behaviors and reactions in diverse intercultural situations. In a sense, they are in control of their behaviors and adjust them as they experience diverse intercultural environments (Deardorff, 2012).

Deardorff's model was selected because it speaks to student affairs professionals' work, especially in global settings (Arasaratnam-Smith, 2017; Deardorff, 2012, 2016a, 2016b). According to Deardorff, student affairs professionals offer many programs and services without adopting an appropriate intercultural framework. As a result, student learning and development may not occur efficiently, especially in diverse intercultural

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environments. Student affairs practitioners should consider implementing such a model to enhance student learning and development (Bakken, 2013; Deardorff, 2012, 2016a, 2016b; Jauregui, 2013).

Limitations and Delimitations of the Study

This study was limited by several factors. First, there was a lack of literature or research that directly explained the role of the cultural context in shaping the student affairs practices at IBCs worldwide. If such impact existed, there was no research regarding how student affairs practitioners adjusted their practices to be relevant to their local context. Furthermore, there was no available research on the effects of cross-cultural training in preparing student affairs professionals for global assignments.

This study was delimited to American IBCs in Education City, Qatar. The data were mainly collected via interviews with student affairs staff members who worked in the American IBCs in Qatar. Also, four interviews were conducted in the United States with former employees who had worked in Education City, based on referrals from participants in Qatar. The study was not designed to assess the quality of any of the participant IBCs nor the individual staff members' performance. Rather, the study was focused on identifying methods or alterations that student affairs professionals have made in their professional practices to accommodate cultural differences in formal or informal ways.

Most of the participants in this study were American citizens who were working as student affairs staff members or administrators at an American IBC in Education City, Qatar. The sample consisted of student affairs professionals who had been recruited in the United States to work at IBCs in Qatar; it excluded student affairs professionals who had

been recruited locally or regionally. No interviews were conducted with students at the participating IBCs. No interviews were conducted with faculty members, although these additional samples might provide greater depth of findings in future related studies.

Significance of the Research

Despite dramatic growth in the number of IBCs, there is still almost no research on the potential cultural conflicts that may present challenge student affairs practices. More than half of all IBCs worldwide are located in the Middle East (Arabian Peninsula) and Asia (C-BERT, 2017; Lane, 2011; Ziguras & McBurrnie, 2011). However, no comparative data currently exist from IBCs to address these challenges (Lane, 2011; Hou, Hill, Chen, and Tsai, 2018). For example, the legal agreements created by the IBC and the host country have prevented informational sharing and establishment of effective international networking opportunities (Anderson, 2016; Hou et al., 2018). The goal of this study was to fill this gap by exploring staff members' understanding of this phenomenon through student services that are implemented at IBCs in Qatar. Specifically, this study provided an opportunity for student affairs staff in Education City to voice their concerns and to describe their struggles and accomplishments in their work in an American IBC located in a traditional Eastern cultural context.

Preparing and training student affairs professionals before they arrive at their international assignments may have a lasting effect on the sustainability of IBCs. The findings of this study can help in understand the role of cross-cultural or intercultural training in the transition and adjustment process for these student affairs practitioners, especially those who were recruited in the United States or from Western developing countries that have significant cultural differences from those in the Middle East.

The study findings can support efforts by U.S. institutions to establish successful internationalization initiatives and plans. The study findings may inform and guide institutional decisions related to establishing IBCs. Institutional leaders can use the information generated by the findings as a resource for recruiting and training student affairs staff for IBCs, demonstrating the institution's commitment to its internationalization plans and to host country needs.

Definition of Key Terms

The following key terms are defined as used throughout the study.

Globalization: "The broad economic, technological, and scientific trends that directly affect higher education and are largely inevitable in the contemporary world" (Altbach, 2006, p. 123). Globalization forces have pushed higher education institutions toward greater global involvement (Altbach & Knight, 2007).

Home country: The country that initiated the international collaboration through introduction of educational programs and degrees to a foreign country; it is considered to be the educational provider (Ziguras & McBurnie, 2011).

Host country: The country that hosts the foreign educational provider and permits that provider to establish a physical presence in the form of an IBC or other educational services, such as those that apply distant learning methods (Ziguras & McBurnie, 2011).

Intercultural/cross-cultural understanding: "The ability to interact effectively with people from cultures that we recognise as being different from our own" (Guilherme, 2000, p. 297).

International branch campus (IBC): An educational facility that is partially or fully owned and established by a home institution in a foreign country. IBCs have similar

infrastructures to those of the home campus, offer the same services, and engage in face-to-face teaching. IBCs offer academic programs that lead to awarding degrees recognized by the home countries of the institutions (Altbach, 2004; Farrugia & Lane, 2013; Lane, 2011; Marijk, 2003; Naidoo, 2008; Wilkins & Huisman, 2012).

Internationalization: Specific policies and programs that governments and higher education institutions and systems implement to deal with the challenges of globalization (Altbach, 2006).

Student affairs/student services: Divisions or departments designated to provide services and support to students in higher education to ensure their growth and development as they complete their academic coursework in college (Ciobanu, 2013; UNESCO, 2002).

Student mobility: The movement of postsecondary students across national and geographic borders to seek educational opportunities that might not be available to them at home due to cultural, socioeconomic, or linguistic reasons (Knight, 2006).

Western student affairs professionals: Staff members who work in higher education, especially in the United States, and have not lived in the Middle East. These staff members have minimal knowledge of Arab and Islamic culture and traditions, particularly those of the State of Qatar.

Organization of the Dissertation

The dissertation reports the study in five chapters. Chapter 1 provides a general background about internationalization efforts through IBCs' initiatives and identifies challenges facing IBCs and student affairs practitioners. Chapter 2 expands the discussion through the literature review addressing the following main issues: internationalization of

higher education, IBCs, the role of student affairs professionals, the concept of culture,

the Arab world, cultural challenges facing IBCs, and the framework utilized in this study.

Chapter 3 describes the methodology for the study. Chapter 4 presents the study's

findings. Chapter 5 presents a discussion of the findings, implications of the results, and

suggestions for future studies.

Chapter 2

Review of Literature

The purpose of this study was to explore how the local cultural context shapes Western student affairs services from the perspectives of student affairs practitioners working in IBCs in the Gulf Region. The study also examined how student affairs staff members adjusted their practices to meet the needs of their local students and to enhance student engagement. This chapter contains background information on (a) internationalization of higher education, (b) Middle Eastern trends in higher education, (c) IBCs, (d) student affairs services, (e) developments in student affairs and services, (f) the concept and role of culture, and (g) the theoretical frameworks utilized in the study.

Internationalization of Higher Education

As the internationalization movement expands in higher education, many scholars use certain key words to describe these efforts: international, global, or intercultural (Knight, 2003; Olson, Green, & Hill, 2006). *Internationalization* can be defined as any attempt to integrate international, global, or intercultural efforts into the mission, structure, or strategies of a higher education institution (Knight, 2003; Olson et al., 2006). *Global learning,* another key concept, enforces and supports efforts at internationalization by promoting

> the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that students acquire through a variety of experiences that enable them to understand world cultures and events; analyze global systems, appreciate cultural differences; and apply this knowledge and appreciation to their lives as citizens and workers. (Olson et al., 2006, p. v)

Higher education institutions started their global efforts by (a) increasing enrollment of international students on their home campuses, and (b) moving their operations to other countries (McBurnie, 2000). Globalization can affect higher education in various aspects: financial, labor market, education, information technology, and networking (Carnoy & Rhoten, 2002).

Internationalization Versus Globalization

Many critics have indicated that internationalization has emerged as a strategy to respond to the strong forces of globalization (Olson et al., 2006). The terms *globalization* and *internationalization* have been used interchangeably in higher education but they refer to two distinct phenomena. Globalization can be viewed as a larger phenomenon guided by major governmental, political, and economical forces and leading to more global involvement by higher education institutions (Altbach & Knight, 2007). On the other hand, internationalization refers to specific policies and programs that higher education institutions implement to deal with the challenges of globalization (Altbach, 2006; Knight, 2003).

Another key difference between the two concepts is related to the perception of control. The globalization movement and its impact go beyond the control of any individual, organization, or single government. Thus, globalization provides the context for economic and academic trends that shape the world today (Altbach & Knight, 2007). However, internationalization can be an important institutional strategy to meet the increasing demands of the globalization movement, specifically in preparing students to engage in a globalized world (Horn, Hendel, & Fry, 2007; Knight, 2003; UNESCO, 2009).

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Globalization has created a new opportunity for higher education institutions, especially those in the United States, to assist in meeting the increasing global demands for access to postsecondary education (Altbach & Knight, 2007). However, at the same time, the increasing pressures resulting from the globalization movement have increased competition for these institutions (Stryker et al., 2016). Information technology also has played an important role in introducing new methods to educate students, such as online and long-distance programs. Some institutions have explored the option of establishing IBCs in partnership with foreign entities or governments, constituting another major form of internationalization (Carnoy & Rhoten, 2002; Stryker et al., 2016).

History of the Internationalization Movement

Universities have always been involved in international exposure to some degree, such as exploring the concept of universal knowledge, research initiatives, and movement of students, faculty, and scholars (Altbach, 1998). However, internationalization of higher education has quickly developed into a major phenomenon, encompassing curriculum and learning outcomes; enhanced cross-border program delivery; and competition for students, teachers, and scholars. These internationalization initiatives were particularly noticeable between the end of World War II and the end of the Cold War (de Wit, Hunter, Howard, & Egron-Polak, 2015; Smithee, 2012).

Most universities that were established in the 18th and 19th centuries exhibited a clear national focus rather than an international focus. Study abroad was not offered and local languages replaced the universal language, Latin (de Wit, 2002; de Wit & Meyer, 2012). Although there was a national focus for higher education institutions, there was a greater exchange of ideas regarding higher education structure, especially between

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Europe and United States. For example, German universities contributed to establishment of modern American universities by establishing scholarship programs, creating necessary resources for research in libraries and scientific laboratories, and offering Doctor of Philosophy academic programs during the period 1880–1914 (Thelin & Gasman, 2011).

The internationalization movement started between World War I and World War II through formal global exchanges and collaboration within the higher education field (de Wit et al., 2015). This was illustrated by establishment of the IIE in the United States in 1919, the Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst in Germany in 1925, and the British Council in the United Kingdom in 1934 (de Wit et al., 2015).

After World War II, as Europe was dealing with recovery and focusing on rebuilding, the United States led efforts in the internationalization movement by establishing special programs such as the Fulbright Program (de Wit & Meyer, 2012; Smithee, 2012). The Fulbright Program is an exchange program allowing U.S. nationals to go abroad to develop an understanding of foreign cultures within an education context. The initial goal was to promote peace and mutual understanding. However, this goal shifted to the promotion of national security and foreign policy, especially during the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union (de Wit & Meyer, 2012; Smithee, 2012).

In the late 1990s, the internationalization movement shifted emphasis from political goals to economic goals in response to globalization pressures (de Wit et al., 2015; Smithee, 2012). The tragic events of September 11, 2001 led to an additional focus on understanding the Islamic religion, Arab culture, and Arabic languages (de Wit et al.,

2015). Those events had a significant impact on the internationalization movement in the United States (Choudaha & de Wit, 2014; Ewers & Lewis, 2008; Johnson, 2018; Knight, 2013; Sirat, 2008).

Prior to September 11, 2001, the United States was viewed as the most popular destination for international students (Johnson, 2018; Smithee, 2012; Zeman & Adrian, 2005). However, many challenges appeared after that date, not only for new international students who had been planning to come to the United States but also for students who were currently studying in the United States. International students shared the perception that the United States was no longer a welcoming and friendly country because of stringent vetting procedures, visa denials, U.S. surveillance and monitoring systems, racial profiling, and hate crimes. These conditions made many students feel unsafe, especially students from the Middle East region (Ahmad, 2004; Johnson, 2018; Smithee, 2012; Zeman & Adrian, 2005).

While the United States was reforming its visa and immigration system, two major shifts took place with the global internationalization movement: (a) International students, especially from the Middle East region, started to seek alternative locations for study abroad, and (b) countries around the world started to develop equivalent educational opportunities, such as IBCs and educational hubs, in Hong Kong, Singapore, Qatar, and United Arab Emirates (Johnson, 2018; Sirat, 2008; Smithee, 2012).

The internationalization movement introduced new methods in student recruitment and mobility, as well as cross-border delivery programs, and focused on the need for capacity building across the globe (Carnoy & Rhoten, 2002: Stryker et al., 2016). Countries and universities became more proactive in expanding international

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activities and relationship building (de Wit et al., 2015). Internationalization is increasingly seen as an essential part of institutional missions, and universities are opting to develop more strategic approaches to their internationalization plans (de Wit et al., 2015; Stryker et al., 2016).

As the internationalization movement continued to expand globally, many institutions continued to explore its benefits and began to include it in their mission and strategic plans (Altbach & Knight, 2007). Key factors in expanding the internationalization movement were efforts to generate more revenues for the institution; meet the global demand for higher education; enhance cross-cultural education for faculty, students, and staff; and satisfy student desires to take advantage of such international education opportunities (Altbach & Knight, 2007). The International Association of Universities (IAU) highlighted a recent important study that explained the benefits of the internationalization movement (Egron-Polak & Hudson, 2014).

Benefits of Internationalization

In April 2014, IAU published its fourth global survey on internationalization of higher education, reporting data from 1,336 higher education institutions in 131 countries (Egron-Polak & Hudson, 2014). The IAU global survey project was designed and implemented with support from the European Commission, the British Council, the Association of International Educators (NASFA), and the European Association for International Education (EAIE). The report is considered to be one of the most comprehensive collections of primary data on internationalization of higher education (Egron-Polak & Hudson, 2014).

Even though there was variety in the respondent institutions' answers, the researchers identified eight common reasons for considering internationalization: (a) to improve the overall quality of education, (b) to prepare students for a global world, (c) to increase recruitment of international students, (d) to improve institutional reputation and ranking, (e) to improve the quality of research development, (f) to establish competition among educational institutions, (g) to meet the labor market's needs within a global context, and (h) to increase financial benefits for the institutions (de Wit et al., 2015; Egron-Polak & Hudson, 2014).

The major consistent theme throughout the findings was that institutions worldwide were focusing on internationalization. For example, 75% of the respondent institutions indicated that they had an established internationalization plan or were in the process of establishing a plan. More than 15% indicated that internationalization was part of their overall institutional strategic plan (de Wit et al., 2015; Egron-Polak & Hudson, 2014).

The report clearly highlighted the importance of internationalization based on responses to the survey (de Wit et al., 2015; Egron-Polak & Hudson, 2014). Key benefits for students included an increase in international awareness and engagement in global matters. Numerous institutions reported that internationalization efforts had assisted in enhancing the quality of instruction and student learning. International collaboration and cultural exchange were highlighted as important key benefits. Financial incentives were ranked lowest by the respondents (de Wit et al., 2015; Egron-Polak & Hudson, 2014).

Although 1,336 worldwide institutions responded to the 2014 IAU survey, the lowest rate of response came from the Middle Eastern region (Egron-Polak & Hudson,

2014). The IAU reported that only 3 of 60 institutions responded to the survey, which made it difficult to generate a perspective on the Middle East region (Egron-Polak & Hudson, 2014). Additional challenges were reported within the Middle East region in the Arab Human Development report published by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in 2003 and in 2011 (UNDP, 2003, 2011).

Middle Eastern Trends in Higher Education

The original Arab Human Development (AHD) report published in 2003 highlighted the poor condition of higher education throughout the Middle East region (UNDP, 2003). The report stated that the number of students enrolling in higher education institutions was generally low in Arab countries, compared to nearby countries that were investing in education, such as Korea. Furthermore, the report noted a lack of scholarly work in the Arab countries, as they had contributed only 1.1% of publications worldwide, especially in the science and technology fields (UNDP, 2003).

The updated AHD report published in 2011 acknowledged some progress in enhancing educational services; however, this progress was inconsistent across the Arab countries (UNDP, 2011). Additional areas of concerns included the absence of parent-teacher relationships, lack of funds dedicated for education, physical problems with the schools' facilities and resources, and the overall low quality of the educational services delivered (Romani, 2009; UNDP, 2011).

Concerns focused on the lack of connection between the higher education sector and the local job market (Romani, 2009; UNDP, 2011). This disconnect led to an increase in unemployment rates because of the high number of graduates with no job opportunities. Potentially based on the reported poor quality of education, investment by

Arab companies in developing the workforce was considered to be the lowest in the world (UNDP, 2011).

The countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council (Kuwait, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, UAE, and Oman) have responded to these educational challenges by investing billions of dollars to improve their higher education infrastructure (Carnoy & Rhoten, 2002; Romani, 2009). The growth of the youth population in the region has resulted in a high demand for higher education. Emergent countries, such as Qatar and UAE, have played a significant role in advancing access to higher education in the Gulf Region (Romani, 2009; Sawahel, 2017). Qatar and UAE have intentionally and strategically attracted many Western higher education providers to establish IBCs, and as a result, now serve as important educational hubs within the region. However, it is not clear that hosting IBCs alone will resolve all of the educational challenges in the Arab region (Romani, 2009).

Currently, the Middle East region hosts more than 30% of the total number of IBCs in the world. The United States, United Kingdom, Australia, and Canada continue to serve as the main providers of IBCs worldwide (C-BERT, 2017).

Development of IBCs

Internationalization efforts by higher education institutions go back to medieval times, when universities in Europe recruited international students and faculty (Altbach & Knight, 2007). Some successful U.S. internationalization efforts can be traced to the 1930s, when Florida State University provided educational programs overseas to meet the needs of the U.S. military and other personnel in the U.S. Panama Canal Zone (Lane, 2011). Johns Hopkins University established the first and most sustainable IBC in Italy in

the 1950s to provide graduate programs in international relations (Lane, 2011; Verbik & Merkley, 2006).

The second wave of international education began in the 1990s and continued in the 2000s, focused on expanded efforts by Australian, United Kingdom, and U.S. universities to establish IBCs in countries such as UAE, Bahrain, Qatar, Singapore, Hong Kong, and Malaysia (Knight, 2011; Redden, 2015a, 2015b). The establishment of these educational hubs was intended to create a knowledge-based society by attracting foreign education providers, recruiting and retaining local and international students, and providing a world-class education and professional training opportunities. These countries, through their educational hubs, accounted for 80% of IBC growth during this period (C-BERT, 2013; Redden, 2015a, 2015b). The State of Qatar and the UAE focused their efforts on establishing themselves as educational hubs to become major educational providers within the region (Knight, 2012b).

The third wave of internationalization focused on continuing growth and development of IBCs and broadening markets in the host and home countries with interest in these joint ventures (Redden, 2015a). From 2012 to 2014, there was a steady increase in the number of countries hosting IBCs, from 53 to 71. In addition, there was a shift in the markets from a focus on the Arabian Peninsula to a focus on Asian countries. The number of foreign educational providers increased from 24 to 30, with new educational institutions emerging in Russia and South Korea, for example (Redden, 2015a). Recent developments include a new higher education provider: the Islamic Republic of Iran (Sawahel, 2017). Iranian universities have opened nine branch campuses, mostly in Arab countries such as UAE, Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Oman, Qatar,

and Kuwait (C-BERT, 2017; Sawahel, 2017). Eight more Iranian IBCs are under development or scheduled to open soon around the world (C-BERT, 2017; Sawahel, 2017).

Education City in Qatar

One of the main goals for establishing Education City in the State of Qatar was to support creation of a knowledge-based economy by promoting research, innovation, and technical skills through higher education (Rostron, 2009). The Qatari government leaders hope that this change will positively influence the economy and generate financial returns in the near future (Rostron, 2009). A small country in both size and population, Qatar is known for its high per capita income and rapid development, chiefly due to national revenues from gas and oil industries (Donn & Al Manthri, 2011).

The QF was established in 1995 and chaired by Her Highness Sheikha Mozah Al Missned (Rostron, 2009). The foundation played a significant role in establishing Education City. Fathi Saud, the first president of the QF, stated that they originally aimed to recruit one university that would offer several academic programs (Krieger, 2008). The University of Virginia was one of the strongest options, according to Saud. However, due to problems with ranking criteria, it was deemed best to go with the second option: attracting several universities that represented the best in their fields (Krieger, 2008). The selection process was rigorous; decisions were based mainly on the universities' programs, reputation, and ranking in their home countries (Lane & Kinser, 2011). The selection process mandated creation of an internationally focused curriculum in various academic fields, leading to diversification of the academic programs to be offered in Qatar (Knight, 2012b).

As part of this project, the QF provided state-of-the-art facilities, including classrooms, laboratories, student centers, and excellent housing facilities. The QF covered the full operational expenses for the branch campuses, including salaries for faculty and staff, facility management, research grants, and student affairs services and programs. The agreement between the QF and the foreign institutions specified that the branch campuses would have full control and autonomy in management and implementation of their academic programs. This agreement is scheduled to be reviewed and renegotiated every 10 years. The QF continues to manage the budget for this project (Knight, 2012b; Lane & Kinser, 2011).

The government of Qatar covers the full tuition cost for Qatari nationals, who constitute more than half of student enrollment in Education City (Krieger, 2008); the remaining students represent more than 80 nationalities (Donn & Al Manthri, 2011). The QF offers a financial aid program that includes various levels and types of financial support through scholarships, loans for students with financial needs, and assistance through a student work program. This financial support for students demonstrates Qatar's commitment to increase access to higher education for students from the country and students from outside the country (Lane & Kinser, 2011).

Student Affairs Services

The concept of student affairs services as a profession is still relatively new in Qatar (Shea, Gormley, Clarke, & Leary, 2016; UNESCO, 2002). In the United States, the term *student affairs* is used to describe a wide scope of campus operations housed in several departments and provided by professionals with various educational backgrounds (Long, 2012). For the purpose of this study, the definition offered by NASPA is used: a

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professional who provides "services, programs, and resources that help students learn and grow outside of the classroom" (NASPA, 2018, para. 1). Professionals in student affairs services aim to provide a wide and diverse variety of services to "enhance student learning, guide academic and career decisions, mentor students, promote leadership skills, and counsel students through crises" (NASPA, 2018, para. 1).

Student affairs offices can include the following service units: academic advising, admissions, nontraditional student services, auxiliary services (e.g., bookstore, dining), student activities and events, career services, spiritual and religious services, precollege programs, counseling services, disability services, financial aid and student employment, health services, international student services, housing, multicultural services, athletics, campus safety, alumni services, student registration and records, and student conduct (der Heyde, 2016; Shea et al., 2016; UNESCO, 2002, 2009).

Historically, student affairs in the United States adopted the philosophy of *in loco parentis*, a Latin term meaning "in place of a parent" (Komives, Woodard, & Associates, 2003; Long, 2012). This approach provided colleges and universities with the legal authority to oversee students closely, with strict adult supervision. Student activities were present at many early colleges, including debating societies, fraternities, and secret societies (Dungy & Gordon, 2011). The faculty and clerical support staff coordinated nonteaching responsibilities such as student housing, food services, academic advising, and student conduct (Long, 2012; Manning et al., 2014). In fact, all members of the college community, "professor, instructor, dean, registrar, adviser, coach, proctor, yes even janitor," shared the responsibility of student services in the early stages of the profession (Manning et al., 2014, p. 54). This image is still apparent in many universities

around the world, as the student affairs profession is not as fully developed in many

countries as it is in the United States (Perozzi, Osfield, Moscaritolo, & Shea, 2016; Shea

et al., 2016). As demands on faculty members increased, expanding their roles and

responsibilities, student affairs practitioners took more responsibility for student welfare

(Dungy & Gordon, 2011; Manning et al., 2014; UNESCO, 2002).

In the United States, a fundamental change for student affairs professionals took

place during the 1960s (Komives et al., 2003; Long, 2012). The relationship established

between students and the student affairs professional changed with the dismissal of the

concept of *in loco parentis* in the U.S. Court of Appeals decision in *Dixon v. Alabama*

State Board of Education in 1961. In that case, the Court ruled that any student age 18 or

older was to be considered a legal adult, with all concomitant rights and responsibilities,

such as due process concerning violation of university rules and regulations. The Court

decision had major implications for student affairs philosophy and practice. Student

affairs practitioners moved away from being punitive figures to educating students

regarding making appropriate choices and decisions as adults (Komives et al., 2003;

Long, 2012). This shift promoted development of the modern doctrine that is now

implemented by student affairs practitioners in their programs and services offered to

students.

Outside of the United States, worldviews and approaches to the concept of *student*

affairs or *student services* are generally based on the local context of each country or

region (Perozzi & O'Brien, 2010; Perozzi, Osfield, et al., 2016). In countries that have

adopted the concept of *student services*, the focus tends to be on delivering services that

students need to complete their education (Perozzi, Osfield, et al., 2016). However,

countries that are more advanced in this profession have generally adopted the concept of *student affairs* because it goes beyond providing basic services to a consideration of the holistic growth and development of students outside the classroom. The student affairs concept has been implemented mainly in the United States, Canada, and Australia (Perozzi, Osfield, et al., 2016).

UNESCO published two reports confirming the significant role of student affairs professionals in educating and developing college students (UNESCO, 2002, 2009). UNESCO acknowledged that student affairs practices have developed only in countries that have (a) the appropriate infrastructure, (b) access to and demand for higher education, and (c) the cultural context to support such practices (UNESCO, 2002, 2009). Those conditions emphasized the importance of a dedicated, educated, and experienced staff that supports development of the student affairs field internationally (Moscaritolo & Roberts, 2016).

Student Affairs Practitioners

Student affairs professionals take the lead in personal development and growth of students and serve as advocates for student success (Blake, 2007; Ciobanu, 2013; Evans et al., 1998; Magolda, 2003; Manning et al., 2014; Schuh et al., 2011; UNESCO, 2002). Many out-of-classroom activities enhance student learning and development, especially those related to practical competencies. For example, managing student government operations and budgeting, publishing articles in the student newspaper, participating in a university band, or being a part of an athletic team can help students to develop and practice skills that employers value, such as teamwork, problem solving, decision making, and time management (National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment

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[NILOA], 2010). Furthermore, student affairs practitioners challenge students to enhance critical thinking skills, one of the important goals in higher education (Magolda, 2003; Ciobanu, 2013). These lifelong competencies can aid in the holistic development of the student as a human being and aid in the student's becoming an active member of the global community (Ciobanu, 2013; UNESCO, 2002).

Student affairs professionals play an important role in supporting academic achievement, enhancing student learning, and increasing retention (Blake, 2007; Ciobanu, 2013; UNESCO, 2002). Integration of academic programs and co-curricular activities are examples of how academic and student affairs professionals work together to enhance student learning and achievement in college (Blake, 2007; Manning et al., 2014). Student affairs professionals are also increasingly involved in classroom teaching. In addition, they assist faculty members who are interested in incorporating cocurricular activities or student development activities in their classrooms (Magolda, 2003; Manning et al., 2014). Student affairs practitioners who work outside the United States play similar roles in supporting and advancing academic success of their students (Deardorff, 2016a; der Heyde, 2016). IBCs provide these practitioners with the platform to promote development and growth of students and to provide a Western educational experience without the need for the students to travel (Stryker et al., 2016). The growth of IBCs, especially in the Middle East, is impressive, with more than 53 IBCs in the UAE and the State of Qatar alone (Stryker et al., 2016). However, this growth may present challenges due to conflicts between the host country's culture and the Western institutional culture of the educational providers (Stensberg, Sliva, & Medina, 2016).

Student Affairs in the Middle East

The student affairs professional who is recruited from Western societies to work in the Middle East may face major challenges in adjusting to strong cultural identities in this region (Altbach & Knight, 2007). The Qatari government designed Education City as an American educational hub and recruited professionals (mainly Americans) to fill key positions as faculty and staff (Vora, 2014). As a result, the project has generated local concerns about potential American Western influence and its impact on the loss of Arabic language, Muslim values, and Qatari traditions (Vora, 2014).

Student affairs professionals' duties and responsibilities are influenced by personal beliefs and values, which can make a significant impact on students' overall experiences in college (Ciobanu, 2013). Culture is a socially constructed phenomenon that must be understood in terms of how it shapes students' lives to achieve multicultural and global understanding (Magolda, 2003; Ciobanu, 2013). In order to be effective in their work, student affairs practitioners must account for local, regional, and national circumstances to establish successful management and leadership models for their services (Moscaritolo et al., 2016; Stryker et al., 2016; UNESCO, 2002).

Currently, there is a lack of research to describe the work of student affairs and services internationally (Kruger et al., 2016; Moscaritolo et al., 2016; Seifert, Perozzi, & Li, 2016; Stryker et al., 2016). The International Association of Student Affairs and Services (IASAS) was one of the first organizations to conduct research on student affairs practices around the world (Seifert, Perozzi, Bodine Al-Sharif, Li, & Wildman, 2014). The IASAS study involved 622 participants from 36 countries who responded online to English-language open-ended items. The world regions covered in the study were North

America, Central America, the Caribbean, Australia and New Zealand, and Europe. A small number of responses were received from the Middle East (16 participants) and Africa (12 participants). No responses were recorded from South America or Asia (Seifert et al., 2014).

One of the important findings regarding student affairs practitioners' credentials was that 90% indicated that they held a bachelor's degree or equivalency (Seifert et al., 2014). However, many had undergraduate degrees that did not relate directly to their work in student affairs (Seifert et al., 2016). The researchers identified challenges in development of student affairs as a global profession because of a lack of opportunities to gain essential educational credentials outside the United States. Furthermore, due to variation in credentials and educational backgrounds among student affairs practitioners across the world, finding a common language to develop conversations among colleagues is currently a major challenge and may become even more difficult in the future (Seifert et al., 2016).

A study by Stryker et al. (2016) focused on student affairs services in Asia and the Middle East. One hundred participants from China, Qatar, United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, Oman, Afghanistan, Lebanon, Caribbean-Lesser Antilles, Singapore, and Malaysia completed the online survey and 26 selected participants were interviewed by the researchers (Stryker et al., 2016; C. Stryker, personal communication, February 4, 2018). Similar to the IASAS study, the participants expressed concern regarding professionalization of the student affairs field. They identified deficiencies in appropriate higher education credentials and a lack of professional development opportunities outside the United States. They expressed concern about lack of funding for student affairs

programs, cultural challenges, safety and security, and political issues. Several participants expressed concern about how student affairs work is perceived by academic affairs personnel as limited in significance (Stryker et al., 2016).

Even though both studies addressed many important issues facing student affairs practitioners around the world, neither directly addressed the large population of student affairs practitioners who currently work at more than 280 IBCs around the world, particularly Western student affairs practitioners who were educated in the United States. In the IASAS study, participants from the United States reported holding advanced educational degrees in higher education, educational leadership, or student affairs administration (Seifert et al., 2014). However, the study failed to report whether these professionals had encountered challenges in working in IBCs regarding implementation of Western practices in other cultural contexts.

Although Stryker et al. (2016) did not directly address Western student affairs practitioners, some participants reported cultural challenges in their new environment. These participants emphasized the need for more meaningful cultural dialogs to enhance their knowledge and understanding and to assist them in navigating cultural values and norms in the host country (Stryker et al., 2016). Other scholars have highlighted the same cultural challenges and emphasized the need for student affairs practitioners to acquire cultural competence and intercultural communication skills (Berardo & Deardorff, 2012; Deardorff, 2016a). Further research is needed to address the impact of local cultural context on Western student affairs practices and how intercultural communications can assist in advancing student affairs work globally.

Western Student Affairs Practice Models

Manning et al. (2014) identified various student affairs practice models that have shaped the work culture of student affairs practitioners in the United States. These traditional models, specifically the out-of-classroom-centered models, represent the early stages of student affairs development in the United States. These traditional models are currently considered "out of date" in the United States because they do not promote collaboration between student affairs and academic affairs offices nor do they support the holistic developmental approach for the students (Manning et al., 2014, p. 70). These models, especially the extracurricular model, are common in the Middle East region in local public and private universities (Kruger et al., 2016; Manning et al., 2014; Perozzi & O'Brien, 2010; Perozzi, Giovannucci, & Shea, 2016). Two models have been selected to illustrate the differences in these approaches: (a) the extracurricular model, and (b) the academic-student affairs collaboration model (Manning et al., 2014).

The extracurricular model. The prefix *extra* indicates that the activities are additional to or not connected to any academic requirements (Manning et al., 2014). In this model, there is a clear separation between efforts conducted by student affairs offices and efforts conducted by academic affairs offices (Kuk, Banning, & Amey, 2010; McClellon, Stringer, & Associates, 2009). In some cases, student affairs practices may even conflict with the academic mission (Manning et al., 2014).

There are many strengths and weakness in the extracurricular model. The model allows student affairs offices to become specialized in their services, allows faculty to focus on teaching and research, and provides students with unique developmental opportunities beyond the academic sphere. On the other hand, the model lacks focus on

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collaboration between the academic and student affairs offices, relies on an individual team approach, and may cause confusion about the mission and purpose of the institution (Manning et al., 2014).

The academic-student affairs collaboration model. In the academic-student affairs collaboration model, academic affairs offices and student affairs offices have intentional and significant interactions to establish shared programs to enhance student learning (Manning et al., 2014). In this model, student affairs professionals work side by side with faculty members to use each other's strengths to coordinate the educational mission for students. The main goal of this collaboration between student affairs and academic affairs is to "develop a shared language around the student success" (Manning et al., 2014, p. 164).

For example, student affairs staff members can apply their knowledge of leadership development to assist in creation of a senior capstone course. Another popular example is the collaboration between student affairs professionals who work in residence halls and an academic department to establish a living learning community or theme housing on campus. These experiences enhance student learning through special programs that are developed and delivered by both groups: student affairs and academic affairs (Manning et al., 2014).

The strengths of the academic-student affairs collaboration model include a team-oriented environment created by both sides and the opportunity to establish a direct connection between the work of student affairs and the educational mission of the institution. Additional benefits, such as sharing expenses and resources, are supported in this model (Manning et al., 2014). On the other hand, challenges have been reported in

establishing such a collaboration. Some student affairs departments have reported a challenge in taking on a larger responsibility for planning and advancing collaborative opportunities or programs. Furthermore, in most cases, student affairs services tend to initiate the discussions for the collaboration model, instead of academic affairs (Manning et al., 2014).

Student affairs models outside the United States. Perozzi, Giovannucci, et al. (2016) argued that adopting Western student affairs models may be unsuccessful because the local context can play a significant role in the process. In some countries, student affairs services are still struggling to receive recognition and validation as a profession. Major challenges in these countries include a lack of professional associations to represent student affairs practitioners, confusion about the role of the profession, and a lack of research supporting the work of student affairs in these regions (Perozzi, Giovannucci, et al., 2016).

Student affairs services can be part of the university's structured system or they can be outsourced to specialized private companies (Ciobanu, 2013; der Heyde, 2016). Kruger et al. (2016) indicated three models that student affairs have adopted across the world: (a) the cooperative model, (b) the public services model, and (c) the university-based model. In the cooperative model (seen mostly in Japan and Korea), services are provided to students in a business-oriented approach. These services could include housing, food services, library management, bookstore, and insurance plans (Kruger et al., 2016). In the public services model (seen mostly in Europe), nonprofit service providers manage and deliver such services as housing, food services, student activities, and counseling services. In the university-based model (seen mostly in North America

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and most of Asia), the operations and delivery of student affairs services are directly connected to the institution. In this model, the university or college takes full responsibility for all aspects of student life under the leadership of student affairs practitioners. In this model, student affairs practitioners apply a holistic approach for student development and growth. Due to advanced support from the institution, financial resources and highly qualified staff are selected to provide student affairs services in this model (Kruger et al., 2016).

Developments in Student Affairs and Services

Although student affairs practitioners share common goals for enriching student experiences globally, the philosophy and delivery of student affairs services can differ across the world (Osfield & Associates, 2008; Perozzi, Osfield, et al., 2016; Shea et al., 2016). The philosophies and delivery of services vary based on the country, the institutional type and size, and resources available at the particular institution (Ciobanu, 2013; Manning et al., 2014; Moscaritolo & Roberts, 2016; UNESCO, 2002).

Developments in Europe. In European countries, the mission of student affairs professionals is to promote access to higher education, improve student retention, and assist students to achieve academic success (der Heyde, 2016). Similar to the United States, the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) adopted the holistic approach and philosophy for the student affairs profession. However, implementation of this approach can be difficult because students are encouraged to become more independent in seeking services and programs offered by student affairs practitioners (der Heyde, 2016).

The EHEA was launched in 2010 after the signing of the Bologna Joint Declaration by 29 European countries. The main goal of the EHEA is to move toward a

more transparent and cohesive higher education system in Europe. As of 2015, 48 European countries had joined the EHEA agreement. Student support units, as part of student affairs, have been developed and implemented in EHEA countries, including support for students with disabilities. However, there are still some major deficiencies in the services, and improvements across the EHEA are needed (der Heyde, 2016).

Student affairs services in EHEA can be structured into two ways: (a) coordinated directly by the institutions, or (b) outsourced to private companies (der Heyde, 2016). Countries in Eastern Europe tend to follow the first structure (operating within the institution), while countries in Western Europe tend to follow the second structure (operating from outside the institution). Currently, there is a movement to change the structure in Eastern Europe to become similar to that in Western Europe by outsourcing student affairs services. Some outsourced companies take a nonprofit approach (as in Poland), while others take a for-profit approach (as in Ireland, the United Kingdom, and Spain). This division of how student services and programs are offered in EHEA can present challenges in implementing a holistic approach by student affairs practitioners and can increase overall student debt (der Heyde, 2016: Moscaritolo et al., 2016).

Developments in the Middle East. National reports prepared by student affairs practitioners around the world have highlighted major challenges in the structure of student affairs services, especially in the Middle East (Callahan, 2016; UNESCO, 2009). Reports from Kuwait, Lebanon, Morocco, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE highlight difficulties in understanding the purpose of student affairs services, especially regarding student development. Student affairs practitioners are viewed as service providers rather than as educators by the university and the local community (Perozzi, Giovannucci, et al.,

2016; UNESCO, 2009). This lack of understanding has caused major challenges in terms of recognition of the student affairs profession and securing financial support for student affairs services and programs (Perozzi, Giovannucci, et al., 2016; Shea et al., 2016; UNESCO, 2009).

Another challenge faced by student affairs services professionals is a lack of standardized structure, appropriate training, or educational programs for student affairs practitioners in the Middle East region and across the world (der Heyde, 2016; Perozzi, Giovannucci, et al., 2016; UNESCO, 2009). Most institutions in the Middle East focus on offering only basic services, such as housing, admissions, student registration, and recreational activities, including athletics (UNESCO, 2009). Failure to offer other essential student services, such as disability services, can have a potentially negative impact on the overall student educational experience and the student's ability to persist to complete a college education.

The student affairs staff at the American IBCs in the Middle East are facing similar challenges in adopting the student affairs models from the United States. IBCs usually follow the same structure and practices as those implemented on their home campuses. However, student affairs practitioners working in IBCs tend to utilize outdated practice models that no longer exist in the United States, such as the extracurricular model (Farrugia & Lane, 2013; Manning et al., 2014; Vora, 2014). As a result, there are inconsistencies between student affairs practice models that are implemented on home campuses and those that are implemented at their IBCs in Qatar (L. Tillman, International Programs Coordinator, personal communication, September 18, 2017; Vora, 2014). It is imperative to explore why student affairs practitioners have selected these outdated

models for their practice at IBCs, especially in the Gulf region.

Future Global Challenges for Student Affairs

In 2008, Osfield and Associates published *Internationalization of Student Affairs and Services: An Emerging Global Perspective*. In this edited publication, many authors highlighted the following challenges that face student affairs services globally: (a) the need to establish counseling services, (b) the need to secure more funds for student affairs programs, (c) the rising costs of higher education, (d) the need to establish more collaboration among institutions, and (e) the need to establish an international student affairs and services association (Osfield & Associates, 2008). Moscaritolo et al. (2016) offered a reflection on some of the concerns discussed by Osfield and Associates (2008) and offered recommendations on how to move forward.

One of the main concerns that students are experiencing around the world is the increased cost of higher education, leading to increased student loan debt worldwide (Moscaritolo et al., 2016). These conditions are reported not just in United States but also in countries such as the United Kingdom and Japan. For example, the average loan debt for students graduating in the United Kingdom doubled from £12,360 to £26,000 from 2008 to 2012 (College Stats, 2013). In Japan, the number of students who applied for student loans increased by 70% from 2001 to 2011. Similar increases in tuition and student debt have been reported in Australia, China, and Canada (College Stats, 2013).

Even though the cost of higher education is increasing globally, a few countries still support the idea of free public higher education, including Argentina, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden (Moscaritolo et al., 2016), although some of these countries are reviewing their policies and practices in terms of their ability to continue to offer free

public higher education. This concern is likely to grow in the next few years; it is important to find ways to assist students to complete their education and start a career without significant debt (Moscaritolo et al., 2016).

The need for counseling services was originally mentioned by Osfield and Associates in 2008. Today, despite an increase in student mental health issues in many countries, the concept of offering counseling services on campuses is challenged worldwide (Moscaritolo et al., 2016). To manage academic assignments and studies, students must be fit, both physically and mentally. Thus, as part of the holistic approach, many student affairs practitioners support promotion of all aspects of student wellness on campus. The roles of the psychologist, counseling staff, and wellness coordinator become essential in reducing stress that students encounter and assisting students with mental health issues (Moscaritolo et al., 2016).

Moscaritolo et al. (2016) and Osfield and Associates (2008) also highlighted the need for student affairs practitioners to develop global competence in intercultural communication. This need is based on a significant increase in the number of student affairs professionals who work outside their native country (Moscaritolo et al., 2016), particularly in transnational education initiatives, such as the IBCs (Stryker et al., 2016). The most recent estimate is that there are approximately 283 IBCs in 77 countries (Stryker et al., 2016).

Student affairs practitioners must be aware of cultural differences when they decide to work internationally (Moscaritolo et al., 2016). A challenge that faces many Western student affairs practitioners is how to modify practices in consideration of the local cultural context. In order to succeed, student affairs practitioners must be flexible

and adaptable to their new work environment (Moscaritolo et al., 2016; Stryker et al., 2016). Skills such as intercultural competence and intercultural communication are essential to enhance student affairs practitioners in understanding their students' needs. In fact, this understanding constitutes the core value of the work by student affairs professionals. Therefore, it is critical that student affairs services ensure that all of its professionals, especially those who are working internationally, seek actively to become competent in these skills based on the local cultural context (Deardorff, 2016a; Moscaritolo & Roberts, 2016; Moscaritolo et al., 2016; Stryker et al., 2016).

The Concept and Role of Culture

Culture has been viewed and defined differently across the world. Collier, Hegde, Lee, Nakayama, and Yep (2001) considered culture to be the shared language, beliefs, and values that are commonly accepted and enforced in a community. People in a specific community would be expected to speak the same language and share the same norms, values, beliefs, and traditions (Collier et al., 2001; Gannon & Pillai, 2016). Martin and Nakayama (2010) defined culture similarly as the "learned patterns of behavior and attitudes shared by a group of people" (p. 84).

Communities share similar traditions: "myths, legends, ceremonies and ritual" (Ting-Toomey, 1999, p. 11). For example, people in the United States celebrate Thanksgiving. Cultural identity is the product of individual interactions and socialization within certain cultural members' groups. These memberships are developed and influenced by parents and they ultimately influence children's cultural identity formation process. It is important to note that cultural values and traditions influence the development of norms for a given community; while cultural values are difficult to

detect, norms can be detected easily through behaviors (Ting-Toomey, 1999). Failure to know or understand cultural norms can lead to serious misunderstanding and confrontation between cultures. Those who violate cultural norms may not even recognize the impact of their actions (Ting-Toomey, 1999).

The role of culture can serve five essential functions (Ting-Toomey, 1999). First, culture assists in developing individual identity. Second, culture encourages the development of group membership; as a result, people can feel safe through a sense of belonging to a group that confirms their behaviors and beliefs. Third, culture establishes rules that govern internal or external interactions (inside and outside established groups) through attitudes. Fourth, culture adapts, changes, and evolves in response to individual and community needs. Fifth, culture and communication are interconnected through reciprocal influences to enhance overall experiences. A culture cannot be understood without a means to communicate it, and communication ensures the continuation and survival of cultural values and traditions from one generation to the next (Ting-Toomey, 1999).

Therefore, culture is recognized as a core concept for intercultural communication (Gudykunst, 2002; Ting-Toomey, 1999). Research in intercultural communication is often focused on studying how cultural groups vary, for example, how Muslims are different from Christians, Americans are different from Japanese, men are different from women, old people are different from young people, and so on (Gudykunst, 2002). Gudykunst (2002) highlighted the differences between cross-cultural and intercultural research. Even though some authors use these terms interchangeably, cross-cultural communication is focused on comparing interactions of certain people from one specific

culture to another culture, while intercultural communication is a larger concept that involves the study of interactions across cultures (Gudykunst, 2002; Lustig & Koester, 2012). This study focuses on intercultural communication.

Intercultural Communication

Communication can be defined as the process by which people express information, ideas, and feelings (Martin & Nakayama, 2010). Communication takes place whether or not meaning is attached to it; communication can be intended or unintended. Symbols are part of the communication process, including written words and verbal or nonverbal symbols.

Nonverbal communication can be defined as "nonlinguistic behavior" that can be expressed intentionally or unintentionally through various communication methods (Ting-Toomey, 1999, p. 115). Nonverbal symbols include body language, such as gestures, facial expressions, body location, touching, and eye movement (Martin & Nakayama, 2010). Nonverbal communication includes universal tools for use around the world. However, nonverbal communication can be culture specific, as certain cultures set rules for "when, where, with whom, and how these different emotions should be expressed or suppressed" (Ting-Toomey, 1999, p. 115).

Remarkably, humans can produce about 700,000 physical signs, 25,000 of which are facial expressions (Axtell, 1998). Body language is considered to be culturally specific, indicating that a gesture or expression or posture may mean one thing in one culture but something different in another culture (Axtell, 1998; Martin & Nakayama, 2010; Ting-Toomey, 1999). For example, former U.S. President George W. Bush used to make the "Hook 'em Horns" hand gesture, which is a well-known symbol among fans of

the University of Texas at Austin (Martin & Nakayama, 2010; University of Texas-Austin, 2018). However, many people around the world view this sign in a completely different light. Norwegians view the symbol as the "sign of the devil" (Martin & Nakayama, 2010, p. 275). People in Central and South America view the sign as stating that "someone's wife is unfaithful" (Martin & Nakayama, 2010, p. 275). The U.S. Joint Forces Command cited this gesture as an example of how miscommunication can affect the global image of the U.S. government negatively (Martin & Nakayama, 2010).

As the world becomes more diverse, there is a growing need for better understanding among the diverse cultures around the world to avoid incidents of misunderstanding, intercultural conflicts, and friction (Martin & Nakayama, 2010; Ting-Toomey, 1999; Zweifel, 2003, 2013). Intercultural communication involves processing and interpreting messages that move from one culture to another. One of the most common reasons for miscommunication is that different meanings may be assigned to the same symbol by different cultures (Martin & Nakayama, 2010; Ting-Toomey, 1999; Zweifel, 2003, 2013).

Intercultural communication also involves material culture (Crane & Bovone, 2006; Hicks, 2010; Martin & Nakayama, 2010). *Material culture* is typically defined as any physical item that can be seen, touched, or felt. Clothes are an example of material culture, and specific meanings are attached to clothes (Crane & Bovone, 2006; Hicks, 2010; Martin & Nakayama, 2010). For example, many Muslim women wear the *hijab* or head scarf to express modesty. However, this item of material culture was viewed differently by many Americans after the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. Many Americans viewed Muslim women who wore the *hijab* as the enemy

and many women were attacked because Americans associated the *hijab* with the women's religion. Today, most Muslim American women who wear the *hijab* do so to symbolize their religion and to show pride in being Muslim (Martin & Nakayama, 2010).

Communication and culture are interconnected (Martin & Nakayama, 2010). In a way, communication reinforces culture and culture influences communication by enacting it in countless ways. Cultural forms (e.g., rituals, myths, social interactions) are performed through a structure of norms, conversations, and interactions. The exchange of these cultural forms through communication affirms the cultural identity of a community, thereby helping to create cultural reality for the community (Martin & Nakayama, 2010; Ting-Toomey, 1999).

Cultural forms take various shapes across the world (Martin & Nakayama, 2010). For example, certain rituals and traditions are carried out differently in the Arab World than they are in the United States. Understanding specific regional cultural expectations can assist in explaining the behaviors of people in specific regions. This dissertation study explores the Arab world regional culture and highlights differences between Eastern and Western cultures.

The Arab World

People from Western countries use the terms *Arab world* and *Middle East* interchangeably, presuming that they have the same meaning (Barakat, 1993; Nejem, 2016). However, the terms have different meanings to Arabic people. The *Middle East* is a smaller geographical area than the *Arab world*; it includes Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, Palestinian territories, and in some definitions Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Iraq, and Iran. On the other hand, the *Arab world* includes all 22 countries in the Arab League of Nations

that predominantly speak the Arabic language and share similar histories, cultures, and religions. As of 2014, the estimated population of the Arab world was approximately 385.3 million, compared to 200 million in 1993 (Barakat, 1993; Nejem, 2016).

The Arab world can be divided into three regions: (a) Levant or Greater Syria (Syria, Lebanon, Palestinian territories, and Jordan), (b) the Arabian Peninsula or Gulf Region (Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Oman, Kuwait, UAE, Qatar, and Bahrain), and (c) Al Maghreb Al Arabi or North Africa (Morocco, Libya, Tunisia, Algeria, and Egypt). It is important to note that the Gulf Cooperation Council consists of all countries in the Arabian Peninsula with the exception of Yemen and Iraq (Nejem, 2016). Iran became separated from the Arab world due to religious and political reasons (Barakat, 1993). Iran did not adopt Arabic as its official language; the population is mostly Shia Muslim, a sect that conflicts with most Arab countries' religious structure, the majority of which are Sunni Muslim (Barakat, 1993; Nejem, 2016). Although there are differences between Sunni and Shia, the divide between the two practices grew significantly after the Iranian revolution in 1979 and the Iraq-Iran war, which ended in 1988 (Barakat, 1993).

The Arab Culture

A recent study by Nejem (2016) examined perceptions of expatriates who worked in Arab countries and discussed their experiences and observations of the Arab people. The participants in the Nejem (2016) study identified cultural values that they observed, such as strong family ties, among Arabs. These strong connections influence daily social interactions and expectations set by Arab communities. Other scholars have highlighted this importance and described the family as the core unit for the Arab society in its essential role of setting expectations for family members (Ayubi, 1991; Barakat, 1993;

Zaharna, 1995).

Additional social norms, such as hospitability, valuing strong relationships, preservation of harmony, respecting elders, and protecting the family honor have been confirmed as important values in the Arab world (Ayubi, 1991; Barakat, 1993; Zaharna, 1995). First, Arabs are described as welcoming, hospitable, and valuing strong relationships. Second, Arabs prefer balance and harmony and avoid conflict; direct communication may not be an appropriate means of communicating. Third, Arabs respect their elders, valuing their experience and wisdom. Fourth, the majority of Arab countries, especially those in the Arabian Peninsula, are very conservative regarding dating outside of marriage and they limit social interactions between males and females. Fifth, same-sex relationships are prohibited, considered a sin in Islamic religion, and illegal in most Arab countries. Sixth, the terms *honor, respect*, and *reputation* are essential concepts that are highly valued in the Arab world. Many Arabs, both men and women, shape their behaviors to protect family honor and reputation (Ayubi, 1991; Barakat, 1993; Nejem, 2016; Zaharna, 1995).

Eastern Versus Western Cultures

As defined by many scholars, Eastern cultures are found in Africa, the Middle East, Asia, and Eastern Europe, while Western cultures are found in North America, Australia, and Western Europe (Minkov, 2011; Nejem, 2016; Nisbett, 2003; Storti, 1999). There are major cultural differences between the Eastern and Western worlds based on values, communication preferences, rituals and traditions, and worldviews (Hofstede, 2001; Minkov, 2011; Nejem, 2016; Neuliep, 2015; Nisbett, 2003; Storti, 1999; Ting-Toomey, 1999).

Several important cultural concepts, such as individuality versus collectivism, the concept of time, the degree of directness, the importance of face, and locus of control represent major differences between Eastern and Western cultures (Hofstede, 2001; Minkov, 2011; Nejem, 2016; Neuliep, 2015; Nisbett, 2003; Storti, 1999; Ting-Toomey, 1999). People in Eastern cultures tend to focus on collectivism rather than individuality, are flexible with time, are not direct in their communications, place value in preserving harmony and saving face, and perceive that they have limited control over their lives. In contrast, people in Western cultures espouse individuality, value time and consider it limited, are direct in communications, value telling the truth, are not afraid to face conflict, and perceive that they have full control over their lives (Hofstede, 2001; Minkov, 2011; Nejem, 2016; Neuliep, 2015; Nisbett, 2003; Storti, 1999; Ting-Toomey, 1999).

Eastern cultures tend to have more structured norms, with strict rules and norms that are not easily changed (Minkov, 2011; Ting-Toomey, 1999). Western cultures can be described as more loose and flexible regarding social norms. Individuals can deviate from typical norms to experiment, thereby actively influencing change in their own cultural norms. Further, Eastern cultures tend not to encourage risk taking in career change, while Western cultures promote risk
taking in order to advance professionally (Minkov, 2011; Ting-Toomey, 1999).

Nonverbal communications are different between Eastern and Western cultures, as well (Neuliep, 2015; Storti, 1999). For example, Western cultures promote establishment of personal space, display of affection, direct eye contact, and firm hand shaking as a sign of confidence. Eastern cultures promote close personal proximity, touch

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as a sign of friendship and care (among those of the same sex), discourage direct eye contact, and discourage public display of affection (Nejem, 2016; Neuliep, 2015; Storti, 1999).

Student affairs practitioners who work in the Arab world can benefit from understanding the Arab culture and the social norms that are espoused by their students and enforced in their local community. The role of religion and culture can assist in explaining certain type of behaviors (Nejem, 2016). The importance of family and the role it plays in the student life can explain how family members may affect student involvement on campus. Understanding the differences between the Eastern and Western cultures can assist student affairs practitioners regarding how to alter their behaviors to be appropriate in their new environment.

Communication Challenges

Many barriers to the communication process can cause cultural clashes (Martin & Nakayama, 2010; Zweifel, 2003, 2013). These barriers include cultural biases, lack of awareness of cultural and language differences, maintenance of the same practices, failure to invest in establishing relationships, and ethnocentrism. One of the important barriers arises from cultural biases in the form of assumptions that many make about others based on accent or a different appearance; these can cause many problems in communications across cultures (Martin & Nakayama, 2010; Zweifel, 2003, 2013).

Cultural and language differences constitute another important barrier to cultural understanding (Martin & Nakayama, 2010; Zweifel, 2003, 2013). Assuming that others follow one's own behaviors or speak the same language can lead to cultural misunderstanding and possibly to cultural clashes. For example, silence is viewed

differently in different cultures. In the United States, most people are uncomfortable with long periods of silence, while Native Americans regard people who remain silent positively. Similarly, in Asian cultures, silence is viewed as a sign of respect as it allows for reflection on what has been communicated, verbally or nonverbally (Martin & Nakayama, 2010).

It can be a cultural challenge to translate from one language to another (Martin & Nakayama, 2010; Zweifel, 2003, 2013). Language is more than a simple tool of communication. Language conveys unique cultural meanings associated with specific words or phrases. For example, phrases that are intended to express a particular concept often do not convey the intended meaning when translated to another language (Martin & Nakayama, 2010; Zweifel, 2003, 2013).

Several recommendations have been offered to avoid cultural misunderstanding (Martin & Nakayama, 2010; Zweifel, 2003, 2013). One of the key strategies is to listen actively for verbal and nonverbal clues. Contrary to popular belief, the majority of communication during a conversation is based on nonverbal actions, such as body language (Martin & Nakayama, 2010). This can present a challenge to someone who is not familiar with these nonverbal clues while communicating actively with someone from another culture (Martin & Nakayama, 2010; Zweifel, 2003, 2013).

Cultural Challenges for IBCs

Some Western IBCs have been accused of lack of respect for the cultural values of their non-Western host countries and instead have been perceived as trying to impose their own cultural values and beliefs on host country students through the policies and practices of their educational system (Shams & Huisman, 2012). This concept has been

described as a form of cultural imperialism or a new form of colonization (Shams &
Huisman, 2012). The majority of the Arab countries have suffered from colonizer actions
and are afraid that IBCs can serve as a new form of colonization and exploitation of the
developing countries that host IBCs (Altbach et al., 2009; Memmi, 1965; Shams &
Huisman, 2012; Stryker et al., 2016).

Cultural clashes can place leaders of IBCs in an ethical dilemma (Shams &
Huisman, 2012). One choice is for the IBC to standardize curriculum, staffing, and
research initiatives to ensure that all students, at home and abroad, receive the same
experience. The alternative is to adapt to the host country's environment and respond to
local student and community needs. Researchers have concluded that IBCs must balance
the two factors and address them simultaneously (Altbach et al., 2009; Farrugia & Lane,
2013; Shams & Huisman, 2012; Stryker et al., 2016). Any IBC that fails to achieve this
balance could be accused of cultural imperialism, or the image and legitimacy of the
institution could be jeopardized due to a possible claim that the IBC is not enforcing
equal standards for all students (Farrugia & Lane, 2013; Shams & Huisman, 2012).

A similar situation was observed in the corporate world upon the opening of
EuroDisney (Zweifel, 2003, 2013) in Paris, France, in 1992. The reaction by French
consumers was extremely negative, and many boycotted the park. Zweifel (2003, 2013)
noted that Disney failed to recognize cultural differences when they created the overall
experience, modeling it exactly after the parks in the United States. For example,
EuroDisney did not serve wine or local food, an absence that many French people did not
appreciate. In addition, the hiring practices of EuroDisney did not encourage local French
people to apply to work in the new theme park. Disney was able to fix this problem by

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hiring a French president for EuroDisney. The new president made changes to adapt to the local culture in park services and structure that restored a positive image of EuroDisney and met the company's profitability goals (Zweifel, 2003, 2013).

This example can serve as a helpful case study for the IBCs to consider when creating new structure and philosophy in the host country. The example also explains that, even within Western societies, such as Europe, cultural differences cannot be ignored; local customs and traditions must be considered for an implementation process to be successful.

Cultural Challenges in Education City

The State of Qatar established Education City in 1995 to become the host of six American universities: Texas A&M, Northwestern, Georgetown, Carnegie Mellon, Weill Cornell, and Virginia Commonwealth (Clark, 2013; Vora, 2014). Reviewing the relevant literature, two studies were found addressing the impact of local culture on faculty and students working in and attending IBCs in Education City, Qatar (Bakken, 2013; Jauregui, 2013).

Jauregui (2013) conducted a study in Education City to explore the impact of cross-cultural training on teaching conducted by expatriate faculty who had been recruited from Western countries. After interviewing Western faculty, Jauregui (2013) concluded that formal and informal cross-cultural training taking place in the State of Qatar aided in development of the faculty's intercultural competencies and enhanced their cultural understanding of their new environment. After training, the faculty adapted the classroom environment to tailor the educational experience to meet the needs of students (Jauregui, 2013).

Jauregui (2013) acknowledged cultural differences in Education City between the Western faculty, who were mainly recruited from the United States, and the students, who were mostly from Qatar or the Arab world. Jauregui made recommendations, based on his findings, to develop faculty intercultural competencies. One of his recommendations was to establish a mentoring program in which veteran faculty members would assist new faculty members to adapt to their new environment. In addition, he recommended that the universities in Education City re-examine their formal and informal training and provide more in-depth training that did not focus on cultural stereotypes or superficial facts. Formal or informal interactions and training should be structured and offered frequently to make a meaningful impact (Jauregui, 2013). This position was confirmed by Deardorff's (2006, 2012, 2016a, 2016b) research and framework that addressed development of intercultural competencies.

Bakken (2013) studied native Qatari students' relationships with the Western IBCs in Education City, Qatar. He examined the motivation behind student decisions to join Western IBCs. He concluded that the family played a significant role in influencing the student's decision to join the IBCs and not leave his/her home country because the parents wanted to have their children learning in an environment that respects the local Arab culture and the Islamic religion (Bakken, 2013).

Bakken (2013) also explored student participation in the classroom and activities outside the classroom. Students were seen to be struggling to adapt to their new learning environment, especially regarding communications and working in mixed-gender groups. In addition, students expressed hesitation to participate in extracurricular activities because they viewed those activities as conflicting with or opposed to their culture and/or

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religious beliefs. For example, the IBC staff who organized social activities promoted mixed-gender interactions even though the practice did not conform to their students' cultural and religious expectations (Bakken, 2013). These findings suggest an absence of sufficient intercultural training of student affairs practitioners who work at IBCs, especially in the Gulf region (Berardo & Deardorff, 2012; Deardorff, 2016a; Jauregui, 2013; Stryker et al., 2016).

The studies reported by Jauregui (2013) and Bakken (2013) confirm the cultural challenges that face faculty and students in IBCs. Faculty were able to enhance their classroom environment after receiving formal and informal intercultural training; student affairs practitioners can benefit similarly from such training to enhance their role in student growth and development through activities and programming offered in and out of the classroom (Deardorff, 2016a; der Heyde, 2016; Jauregui, 2013; Magolda, 2003; Manning et al., 2014). However, research is needed to measure the impact of such interventions on Western student affairs practitioners who work at IBCs across the world.

Theoretical Framework

Deardorff's model of intercultural competence is considered to be one of most influential research-based frameworks in the intercultural training field and is frequently used in higher education settings (Arasaratnam-Smith, 2017; Deardorff, 2012, 2016a, 2016b; Moscaritolo et al., 2016; Stryker et al., 2016).

Before discussing the model, it is important to highlight some of the myths mentioned by Deardorff (2016b) when discussing intercultural competence. Unfortunately, many student affairs practitioners believe in these myths, which can challenge the creation of an impactful intercultural experience for students. Deardorff

(2016b) countered the myths with the following positions. First, students do not become culturally competent just because they study abroad. Second, students do not learn from each other just because they stay in the same room to attend a social and a cultural event. Third, intercultural competence does not happen simply by attending a course or a training session. Fourth, understanding cultural differences does not necessarily lead to developing competence. Fifth, speaking a foreign language does not necessarily lead to competence in that culture. The model of intercultural competence addresses how intercultural competence is developed and assists in exposing myths about intercultural competence (Deardorff, 2016b). Deardorff's (2012, 2016a, 2016b) framework can present student affairs practitioners with a new challenge to develop their own intercultural skills and to create a meaningful and impactful intercultural learning experiences for students.

Deardorff's (2012) model consists of five stages: attitudes, knowledge, skills, internal outcomes, and external outcomes. The critical attitudes stage promotes curiosity and openness to explore differences, with the understanding that people may have to go beyond their comfort zone to start the process of developing intercultural competence. In the second stage, knowledge, people develop self-awareness of their own culture and connect it with their worldview so that they can understand others' worldviews from others' perspectives. In the skills stage, people develop needed skills to conduct observations, processing and reflecting on what they have observed. Deardorff (2006) indicated that it is possible to move to the final stage (external outcomes) once the knowledge and skills stages have been navigated successfully. However, they may not develop sufficient competence to complete the full cycle (Deardorff, 2006).

The next two stages illustrate the move from interpersonal development (individually focused) to group interactions (Deardorff, 2006, 2012). In the internal outcomes stage, people become flexible and adaptable to the "ethnorelative perspective." In other words, they become comfortable with other environments and traditions by adapting their behaviors and judgments to diverse intercultural settings (Deardorff, 2006, 2012). The final stage, external outcomes, happens when people are in full control of their behaviors and communication skills and use them in an appropriate and effective manner in intercultural situations (Deardorff, 2012).

Deardorff (2012) highlighted key points regarding her model, which was developed in 2006. First, the framework indicates that intercultural competence is a continuous, lifelong process that must be sought intentionally to achieve positive outcomes. Second, the attitudes stage is considered as the catalyst to the intercultural competence cycle. People will not seek the intercultural competence process until they have developed an openness or curiosity to understand other cultures. Third, it should be noted that this is a U.S.-based framework because participants in the study were mostly from the United States. Deardorff (2012) questioned the adaptability and relevance of such framework when applied outside the United States.

Deardorff's framework presents many implications for student affairs practitioners, especially in an international setting (Arasaratnam-Smith, 2017; Deardorff, 2012, 2016a, 2016b). Many of the programs and services offered by student affairs practitioners do not apply any frameworks, particularly regarding intercultural competence (Deardorff, 2012, 2016a, 2016b).

Deardorff (2012, 2016a, 2016b) challenged student affairs practitioners to integrate the model of intercultural competence in their daily work to assist students in developing intercultural competence. For example, Deardorff encouraged student affairs practitioners to develop cultural programs that promote students' curiosity and openness as a catalyst to start the intercultural competence development process. Deardorff also urged student affairs practitioners to become intentional in their services and programs to go beyond the superficial level of cultural holidays, international food festivals, and other cultural traditions. Alternatively, Deardorff (2012, 2016a, 2016b) proposed intentional infusion of the theoretical framework into programming and services that are planned by student affairs practitioners and offered to students.

Deardorff (2012, 2016a, 2016b) cautioned student affairs practitioners about approaching the solution to developing intercultural competence through offering certificate programs to students. Student affairs practitioners should be aware of the negative implications of such programs: false assumptions that students will develop intercultural competence, not utilizing a solid framework in the learning process and not implementing an assessment process to measure student learning and advancement through the process (Deardorff, 2012, 2016a, 2016b).

Deardorff's (2006) framework guided this study and provided an understanding of how student affairs practitioners implement services and programs in an international setting. As Jauregui (2013) concluded, Western faculty can enhance the teaching environment in the classroom by encouraging intercultural competence. This framework also assisted in understanding why student affairs practitioners working in IBCs in the Middle East made decisions to tailor their services and programs based on their

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intercultural development (Deardorff, 2012, 2016a, 2016b; Jauregui, 2013). Although this study was not designed to measure the intercultural competence level of the participants, Deardorff's (2006) framework suggested that enhancing student affairs practitioners' competence may lead to improvement in delivering relevant leadership programs for students (Deardorff, 2012, 2016a, 2016b).

Chapter 3

Research Design and Methodology

The American IBCs were widely recognized in the Gulf region as many U.S.-based campuses opened in the region (Lane, 2011). Most notably, six American IBCs were opened between 1998 and 2008 in Education City with collaboration and support from Qatar Foundation, the host entity in the State of Qatar. Since these Western-based higher education institutions were established in Qatar (a non-Western country), it was important to understand the role, if any, of local culture in shaping practices of the student affairs practitioners.

This study explored how student affairs practitioners view their implementation of Western student affairs practices within the local context in the State of Qatar. The study also explored how Western student affairs practices were altered to meet the needs of local students. The examination of student affairs practices addresses (a) how these practices were implemented in IBCs, (b) the role of local culture in IBCs, and (c) best practices that were recommended by the participating student affairs practitioners.

This chapter describes the methods and processes that were followed in the study. The chapter includes the following sections: the research site, the research design, the research questions, the research participants, the data collection and analysis procedures, research credibility and validity threats, and ethical considerations.

The Research Site

The State of Qatar is a small country, approximately half the size of New Jersey, with a total population of 2,450,285 (Qatar Ministry of Development Planning and Statistics [QMDPS], 2018). The local Qatari population size is 306,187, which makes

expatriates the largest group in Qatar (Gulf Research Center, 2017). The Qatari government launched its Qatar National Vision 2030 program (called QNV 2030) in 2008; one of the important pillars of this plan is human development (QMDPS, 2008). The human development pillar is designed to promote progress by providing a world-class education system to meet the needs of its citizens (QMDPS, 2008). The IBCs operating in the State of Qatar assist in reaching the goals established in QNV 2030 (QMDPS, 2008).

The State of Qatar was selected as the research site for this study based on many important factors: (a) Qatar is considered one of the major educational hubs in the Gulf Region, (b) Qatar Foundation provides generous support to IBCs to sustain their operations in the country, (c) Qatar Foundation hosts a unique cluster of six American IBCs in one location (Education City), and (d) I have access to these six IBCs as I work in the State of Qatar.

The student affairs staff members at the six IBCs in Education City were invited to participate in the study per the criterion established for participation. At the time of the study, approximately 15 student affairs staff members working in Education City met these criteria. Since Education City is a small close-knit community, the names of the participating university sites and staff members were kept confidential and pseudonyms were used. This encouraged participants to feel comfortable to participate and to share their knowledge and experiences.

The Research Design

Researchers often select their approach by considering procedures of inquiry, data collection, data analysis, and data interpretation (Creswell, 2014). However, the most

critical component in the decision process relates to the nature of the phenomenon under study. For example, qualitative research is designed to explore difficult and complex social problems encountered by individuals or groups (Creswell, 2014; Merriam, 1998). In contrast, quantitative research is intended to test a specific hypothesis or theory through examination of defined variables that can be measured using certain statistical tools (Creswell, 2014; Hammersley, 2013; Merriam, 1998). This study utilized a qualitative approach because the goal was to understand student affairs practitioners' perspectives on the topic of study. Furthermore, this study employed the social constructivism worldview to explore the meaning created by the student affairs practitioners through implementation of their Western practices in Qatar.

The Constructivist Worldview

Researchers consider their study approach by examining three important areas: their philosophical worldview, research design, and research methods (Creswell, 2014). The terms *worldview* or *paradigm* can be defined as "a basic set of beliefs that guide action" (Guba, 1990, p. 17). Although the researcher's personal philosophical beliefs and assumptions may not appear to be important, they can in most cases influence their decision in selecting a research methodology (Creswell, 2014; Merriam, 1998). Therefore, I discuss my philosophical worldview, the plan to adopting it for this study, and how my worldview guided my approach to the study (Creswell, 2014; Merriam, 1998).

In the social constructivism approach, people are interested in learning about their environment (Creswell, 2014). People generate meaning for their interactions and behavior within their specific communities that may be quite different from meaning

ascribed by others who live in other cultures or nations. Thus, I focused on participants'

responses and perceptions to understand the phenomenon under study. The participants

played an essential role in communicating the meaning of working in student affairs in

the local community in Qatar (Creswell, 2014).

In this study, understanding social and cultural norms were very important,

especially as they guide people in establishing expectations about their way of life

(Creswell, 2014). Often, these norms and values are passed from one generation to the

next through history and education. However, these values and norms are also subject to

change and development as people interact and negotiate the cultural meanings for these

behaviors over time. Thus, understanding the local context was essential in this study

because that context has certain values and cultural norms that differ from American

values and norms on which student affairs practices are based. In addition, my own

understanding of the differences assisted in my role as the researcher to comprehend the

meaning of the experiences taking place within the local context (Creswell, 2014).

As a constructivist researcher, I acknowledge two important assumptions that

guided this study (Creswell, 2014; Crotty, 1998). First, people create meaning by

interacting in their environments and by reflecting on those experiences. For example, I

posed general unstructured questions to encourage participants to share their perspectives

and to feel comfortable to reflect on those experiences. Second, people utilize meanings

that are already established and recognized within their communities. I invested time to

study and understand the local context of the study participants in their work (Creswell,

2014; Crotty, 1998).

This study followed a social constructivist approach due to the nature of the study. One of the important goals for the study was to understand how Western student affairs practices were implemented in the American IBCs in the State of Qatar. I examined the perceptions and insights from participants to identify their understanding of the services that they deliver to local students in the State of Qatar. Furthermore, the social constructivist approach aided in understanding how the local context shapes student affairs practices, which may assist in determining the most successful practices to complement the local cultural and social conditions in the State of Qatar. Social constructivism is typically associated with qualitative methodology; this study utilized a qualitative methods approach (Creswell, 2014; Merriam, 1998).

Positionality Statement

Researchers can bring their own worldviews, experience, and work ethic to a research project (Creswell, 2014; Flyvbjerg, 2006, 2011; Merriam, 1998). Therefore, qualitative researchers should identify and acknowledge any biases or personal views that they bring to their research (Creswell, 2014; Flyvbjerg, 2006, 2011; Merriam, 1998). Since I have been working professionally in student affairs for more than 12 years, I bring a considerable amount of experience to the project. However, in this research, I sought not to allow my personal experiences to interfere with or influence my role as a researcher. As a qualitative researcher, I did not hold preconceived opinions about the phenomenon that I was exploring. Rather, I used my work experiences to reflect on the participants' feedback as it was relevant and applicable in the situation.

I believe in pursuing my own subjectivity by acknowledging and reflecting on my emotions and any biases that may arise while conducting research (Peshkin, 1988). One

of the important steps to accomplish this task was to keep a personal journal to account for my biases. I can identify these biases not only by acknowledging the participants who shared my perspectives but also by recognizing others who presented a different or new perspective (Peshkin, 1988). The personal journal helped me to reflect on the interviews and identify any personal feelings or connections that could limit my ability to be neutral and subjective when reviewing and processing the collected data (Peshkin, 1988; Stringer, 2014; Yin, 2016).

My main motivation to conduct this research came from observations during my transition to work in Education City, Qatar. I moved to Qatar in 2012 after Texas A&M University recruited me from New York. I faced a few challenges during my transition; however, I felt that my transition went much more smoothly than that of my U.S. colleagues because of my ability to speak the local language (Arabic) and my knowledge and understanding of the local culture, since I grew up in the Middle East region. As a result, I saw the need to conduct research on this phenomenon because of the rapid growth and expansion of American International Branch campuses across the world. Although there are strong established standards in the United States, there are currently no recognized international standards and accepted practices for student affairs practitioners to follow when working overseas. This is mainly due to a lack of research in the student affairs and student development areas in general outside the United States. My commitment to my profession and advancing it internationally has made me passionate about conducting this research study.

As a researcher, I sought to conduct a study that would deliver the facts, be transparent, and be neutral to all parties involved. I did not anticipate or support any

specific outcome and hoped that the study results would fill the gap and produce a well-rounded study to benefit all student affairs practitioners working overseas and ultimately benefit local students who are participating in this unique U.S. educational experience overseas.

Qualitative Methodology

The world is becoming more complex and diverse every day (Martin & Nakayama, 2010; Zweifel, 2013). Rapid growth and development can present a challenge in understanding the cultural changes in both small and large communities (Covarrubias, 2002; Drew, 2001; Flick, 2009). As a result, there is a growing need for using qualitative methodology to study social problems (Flick, 2009; Merriam, 1998; Yin, 2016). Qualitative research contributes to creating new knowledge that enhances understanding of the social world and how it is constructed (Creswell, 2014; Crotty, 1998; Merriam, 1998; Yin, 2016). For these reasons, qualitative methodology was selected for this study to understand student affairs practitioners' perspectives regarding implementation of Western student affairs practices in the local context in the State of Qatar.

Writers and historians have for centuries utilized observations and interviews in their work; however, these methods were not formally adopted as part of the qualitative methodology until the end of the 19th century (Clifford, 1983; Taylor, Bogdan, & DeVault, 2016; Wax, 1971). Researchers typically select their methodology by defining the approach that they wish to pursue to explore an existing problem (Taylor et al., 2016). Qualitative methodology naturally produces descriptive data rather than numerical data, as are used in quantitative methodology (Creswell, 2014; Merriam, 1998). The data generated in this study came directly from the participants' spoken or written words

through the interviews and the review of the material culture items provided by the participants (Bagnoli, 2009; Creswell, 2014; Hammersley, 2013; Merriam, 1998; Taylor et al., 2016). This qualitative research study is designed to understand and interpret the meaning of the student affairs practitioners' experiences and how they construct the meaning of those experiences within their social reality (Hammersley, 2013; Merriam, 1998; Yin, 2016).

One of the core values in qualitative research is its ability to recognize the importance of the meaning that people apply to their experiences, pay attention to the way that people think or act in real-life situations, promote the study of people in their local cultural context and natural settings, encourage researchers to explore a wide range of perspectives, and enable researchers to keep an open mind to gain information and insight about the participants and their local context (Hammersley, 2013; Taylor et al., 2016; Tracy, 2013; Merriam, 1998; Yin, 2016). In addition, qualitative methodology provides the researcher with flexibility in determining how data collection and analysis processes are conducted (Merriam, 1998). Thus, I have chosen qualitative methodology because of its adaptability to develop the needed structure for the study (Creswell, 2014; Hammersley, 2013; Merriam, 1998; Taylor et al., 2016; Yin, 2016).

There are additional advantages and strengths in selecting qualitative research methods (Creswell, 2014; Merriam, 1998; Yin, 2016). First, qualitative methodology promotes field work and encourages researchers to conduct inquiries in real-life situations (Creswell, 2014; Merriam, 1998). Second, as the researcher, I will play an essential role in directly collecting data from the participants rather than relying on tools or instruments (Creswell, 2014; Merriam, 1998). Third, I will utilize multiple sources of

data, including interviews and a review process of material culture, as recommended by proponents of qualitative methodology (Creswell, 2014; Merriam, 1998; Yin, 2016).

On the other hand, qualitative research is often criticized for lacking scientific rigor, strong justification for its methods, or the potential negative impact of the researcher's bias (Merriam, 1998; Rolfe, 2006; Sandelowski, 1993). For example, some qualitative researchers have been criticized for relying solely on interviews as the main source of study data (Hammersley, 2013). There is a high risk in depending on only interviews alone because the researcher's objectivity in conducting interviews may come into question (Flick, 2009; Hammersley, 2013; Merriam, 1998). The qualitative researcher must have good communication skills in order to connect well with participants, listening actively and asking appropriate questions (Merriam, 1998). The researcher's ability to listen openly without prejudice or preconceived ideas can be a critical challenge in qualitative inquiry (Flick, 2009; Hammersley, 2013; Merriam, 1998; Yin, 2016).

Some of the concerns with qualitative research can be addressed by applying various strategies such as (a) acknowledging personal biases, (b) establishing and following ethical standards to avoid those biases, (c) ensuring accurate and clear record keeping to reflect objectivity in the decision-making process, (d) seeking participants' feedback and endorsement of the interview transcripts and initial findings, and (e) using multiple data sources to conduct triangulation for clear and comprehensive findings (Creswell, 2014; Flick, 2009; Long & Johnson, 2000; Merriam, 1998; Morse, Barrett, Mayan, Olson, & Spiers, 2002; Sandelowski, 1993; Slevin & Sines, 2002; Yin, 2016). I implemented many of these strategies to enhance this qualitative study. In addition, I

utilized a qualitative case study approach to support the social constructivist worldview that was described earlier.

Qualitative Case Study Approach

The case study approach, employed in this study, is one of the most popular designs used in social sciences and in qualitative methodology (Merriam, 1998; Yin, 2014). There are several definitions for the case study approach, which has caused confusion and misunderstanding among researchers (Merriam, 1998). For example, some scholars (e.g., Yin, 2014) have made a clear distinction between the case under study and the end product of the study; others (e.g., Merriam, 1998; Stake, 1995, 2005) have selected to focus on the case instead. The three cited scholars, Merriam, Stake, and Yin, are the primary contributors to the development of the case study approach. Each has a particular perspective on how to view, define, and structure the case study approach.

The major debate between these schools of thoughts is whether the case study should be classified as a qualitative research *design* or as an independent research *method* (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Flyvbjerg, 2006, 2011; George & Bennett, 2005; Gerring, 2004; Merriam, 1998; Simons, 2009; Stake, 1995, 2005; Verschuren, 2003; Yin, 2014). For example, some scholars consider the case study to be a research design within the qualitative methodology and define it as a *qualitative case study* (Merriam, 1998; Stake, 1995, 2005). In this perspective, researchers are expected to follow the qualitative methodology guidelines in collecting, analyzing, and validating data (Merriam, 1998; Stake, 1995, 2005). The second school of thought presents the case study as an *independent research method* with its own guidelines to be applied in either qualitative or

quantitative studies (Yin, 2014). Yin (2014) presented a very structured approach to case study that could present challenges to researchers who like to adopt flexibility in approaching their case study design.

Another important difference in the approaches of these three scholars is their *epistemological beliefs* (Merriam, 1998; Stake, 1995, 2005; Yin, 2014). The term refers to the basic beliefs on how knowledge is created and how research should proceed to reach its findings (Yin, 2016). Epistemological beliefs have influenced how these three scholars developed the case study design and its guidelines for use in research (Merriam, 1998; Stake, 1995, 2005; Yin, 2014). While Merriam (1998) and Stake (1995, 2005) share a belief in the constructivist worldview, Yin (2014) follows a positivist view. The positivist worldview restricts the generation of knowledge to scientific methods, such as statistical procedures (Creswell, 2014; Yin, 2016). However, constructivism recognizes the important role of people in creating the meaning and social realities that cannot be measured simply by following specific scientific
procedures and methods (Creswell, 2014; Crotty, 1998; Yin, 2016).

For the purpose of this study, I adopted the perspective of Merriam (1998) and Stake (1995, 2005) in defining the case study approach as a qualitative research design intended to explore a social phenomenon within a single or small number of occurrences. This approach allowed flexibility and led to a holistic understanding of the various perspectives presented by the participants (Merriam, 1998; Stake, 1995, 2005). In addition, it was important not to be limited in design structure (Stake, 1995, 2005). It was difficult to predict the challenges that would be encountered during the study; thus, it was

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important to maintain flexibility and adoptability to address these obstacles (Stake, 1995, 2005).

The qualitative case study approach was developed to explore a phenomenon in its real-life setting (Creswell, 2014; Merriam, 1998; Stake, 1995, 2005). The case can be considered as an individual (e.g., student, faculty, staff member) or a class, institution, or community (Merriam, 1998; Stake, 1995, 2005). The qualitative case study design is influenced by its environmental factors and provides the researcher tools to determine limits and context for the case (Flyvbjerg, 2011; Merriam, 1998; Stake, 1995, 2005). For example, Baxter and Rideout (2006) conducted a qualitative case study to explore decisions made by nursing students and how the environment shaped those decisions. The local context in which the decision process was taking place was an important factor in the study. As a result, the researchers studied the conditions in clinics and classrooms because students were developing skills to make decisions in those settings (Baxter & Rideout, 2006).

The qualitative case study approach can be classified in two types: a single case or a multiple-case study (Merriam, 1998). In the single-case type, the focus is on an individual phenomenon, defined as a *case*. In the multiple-case study, the focus is on investigating several qualitative case studies, each studied individually, followed by a comparison across the case studies to determine common themes or differences (Merriam, 1998). In this study, I will utilize the single-case type by focusing on student affairs practices as the phenomenon that forms the case (Merriam, 1998).

The single qualitative case study can be further categorized in terms of the concept of time to include the following types: "*retrospective, snapshot, and diachronic*"

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(Thomas, 2011, p. 517). In the retrospective case study, the goal is to study a historical

phenomenon that occurred in the past. The data collection process involves reviewing

essential historical documents (Merriam, 1998; Thomas, 2011). In the snapshot case

study, the case under study is explored during a specific period of time span (Thomas,

2011). For example, the study can involve a specific event taking place during a semester

or a full academic year. In the diachronic case study, the events of focus occur over time,

highlighting the growth and development of the case; this type shares characteristics with

longitudinal studies (Thomas, 2011). For the purpose of this study, a snapshot case study

approach was adopted to examine current student affairs practices, which seem to change

over time (Thomas, 2011). In addition, cultural norms and values can change over time;

thus, studying the past may not be essential in identifying current key practices of student

affairs practitioner in response to their current students' needs (Creswell, 2014; Crotty,

1998).

The qualitative case study design provides an in-depth approach to inquiry by

promoting collection of data from several sources, leading to triangulation (Merriam,

1998; Stake, 1995, 2005). The typical data collection methods include interviews,

observations, review of artifacts and documents, and other techniques such as audio and

video recordings (Creswell, 2014; Merriam, 1998; Rossman & Rallis, 2012; Stake, 1995,

2005; Stringer, 2014). Field notes and journals can be included in the data collection

process (Stringer, 2014; Yin, 2016). Field notes and journals can include the researcher's

own words to be used for further exploration or to discuss questions with members of a

research team; they can aid in reflection and in generating new ideas (Stringer, 2014; Yin,

2016).

The qualitative case study approach has many advantages and benefits, such as providing tools to examine complex social phenomena, leading to a holistic and in-depth understanding of the phenomenon, and guiding reform of practices and policies (Merriam, 1998). In addition, case studies can help in exploring difficult cultural situations that involve complex human relationships and unclear context (Bloor & Wood, 2006; George & Bennett, 2005). On the other hand, case study has been criticized. For example, the approach can be expensive and extensive in time (Merriam, 1998). Also, in some cases it is difficult to generalize the findings (Flyvbjerg, 2006, 2011; Merriam, 1998). Researcher bias can influence findings based on preconceived beliefs or opinions, since the researcher plays an essential role in data collection and analysis (Flyvbjerg, 2006, 2011; Merriam, 1998).

Applying the Case Study Approach

The six American IBCs in Education City form a special community of schools that share many goals. In fact, many of the branch campuses work on shared projects, and students generally interact and identify as part of the Education City community (Vora, 2014). The contract between the Qatar Foundation and the six American IBCs contains many similar expectations, which makes it easy to form a bond (Anderson, 2016). For example, the student activities coordinators at the six American IBCs have established the Student Life Committee, which meets biweekly to discuss shared events and collaboration in Education City (personal communication, L. Tillman, International Programs Coordinator, September 18, 2017).

A qualitative case study approach was selected to explore this phenomenon within the real-life context of Education City, Qatar. The student affairs practitioners working in

Education City were treated as a single case (Merriam, 1998; Stake, 1995, 2005). The qualitative case study approach was suitable for this study because the study was conducted in a tight-knit community where the student affair practitioners may operate independently but within the same unified and integrated system in Education City, Qatar (Merriam, 1998; Stake, 1995, 2005; Yin, 2016). Consideration of the cultural context was important because local cultural norms, values, and customs played an essential role in defining expectations for activities that were conducted by student activities professionals (Creswell, 2014; Crotty, 1998).

Multiple data sources were utilized, including in-depth semistructured interviews and a review of artifacts created by student affairs professionals who work or had worked in Education City (Creswell, 2013; Rossman & Rallis, 2012; Stringer, 2014; Yin, 2016). Artifacts included publicity materials for events, instructions for student clubs and organizations, and promotional materials created to engage students in activities that were provided by some participants during the interview process (Creswell, 2013; Rossman & Rallis, 2012; Stringer, 2014; Yin, 2016).

Research Questions

This study addressed the following key questions:

1. How do student activities professionals describe the role of local culture in shaping Western student affairs services implemented on their branch campuses?

2. In what ways do student activities professionals alter their Western practices at IBCs in Qatar?

3. What best practices can emerge from the study findings to guide student activities professionals who work at IBCs in the Middle East Region?

Research Participants

The concept of data saturation was introduced by Lincoln and Guba (1985); it refers to researchers encountering repetition of the data, common and consistent patterns, and no new ideas emerging (Creswell, 2014; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam, 1998). The goal of any qualitative study, especially in the case study approach, is to provide in-depth understanding of the phenomenon, rather than having a large number of participants to represent populations or to generalize findings, as is done in quantitative research. A single case study can generate great insight, regardless of the size of the sample (Boddy, 2016; Creswell, 2002, 2012, 2014; Gentles, Charles, Ploeg, & McKibbon, 2015). Creswell (2012, 2014) recommended having a range of 2 to 20 participants in qualitative studies, based on the specific type of study and keeping in mind the point of data saturation. Therefore, my goal was to recruit a sufficient number of participants (10 to 15), based on availability, to reach data saturation. Furthermore, my goal was to recruit a diverse sample by inviting participants from all six American branch campuses located in Education City.

Based on qualitative research principles and the case study approach, participants were selected using two purposeful sampling strategies: criterion sampling and snowball-chain sampling (Creswell, 2014; Kuper, Lingard, & Levinson, 2008; Maxwell, 2013; Patton, 2002; Rossman & Rallis, 2012; Stringer, 2014). The following criteria were established for participation: (a) actively engaged with students by organizing student activities, (b) having worked at one of the American IBCs or in Education City for at least a year, (c) having worked previously in the higher education profession in the United States, and (d) having completed education in the United States.

These criteria assisted in narrowing the selected participants in different functional areas of student affairs. First, I started by selecting student activities coordinators because they typically have the most interactions with students outside the classroom environment and they were potentially the most affected in considering the impact of culture on their activities. Second, I selected staff members who had worked for at least one year in Qatar because the goal of the study was to examine the impact of the local culture on student activities, and new staff would not be able to understand the local culture immediately. To do so requires time to adjust, observe, and learn about the new environment. Third, participants had prior work experience in the United States to be able to identify differences in student activities practices between the United States and the Middle East, especially in Qatar. Local student affairs staff members who had never worked in the United States might not be able to recognize those differences. Similarly, only student affairs staff members who had completed their education in the United States were selected because they had experienced the U.S. educational system and were familiar with the services that were offered through student affairs in the United States.

Participants were invited via an email. The specific criteria were listed in the email to help potential participants to determine whether they were eligible to participate in the study. A snowball-chain sampling technique was implemented by asking initial participants to recommend colleagues who could provide rich data for the study (Patton, 2002; Stringer, 2014). This method was especially helpful in locating and inviting former employees who had recently left and returned to the United States.

Data Collection Procedures

Interviews served as the primary method for collecting the data needed for the study. Interviews were conducted in the United States and Qatar after approval by the Rowan University Institutional Review Board (IRB) and a local IRB (provided by Weill Cornell Medicine-Qatar). The semistructured interview structure was selected to provide flexibility during the interviewing process (Creswell, 2012; Rubin & Rubin, 2012; Stringer, 2014). Semistructured interviews are carefully designed to elicit interviewees' perspectives and opinions about a particular phenomenon, instead of limiting their ability to express their thoughts through a more structured approach. In a semistructured interview, the interviewer first asks the primary question, then utilizes probes and follow-up questions to gain in-depth information from participants (Creswell, 2012; Rubin & Rubin, 2012; Stringer, 2014). Probes can be classified into two types: verbal and nonverbal (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). Verbal probes are direct, such as, "Can you tell me more about this? Can you give me an example?" Nonverbal probes can take the form of the researcher giving the participant more time to answer a question or showing physical expressions to encourage the participant to continue to speak (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). I used both verbal and nonverbal probing strategies in the interviews.

Interviews ranged from 60 to 90 minutes in length, depending on the information discussed by the participant. The interviews started with a short introduction and broad questions (Appendix A), followed by appropriate probing to ensure in-depth understanding of the participant's perspective. All interviews were recorded and transcribed (Rubin & Rubin, 2012).

In addition to interviews, available artifacts from the branch campuses provided by the participants (such as events posters, newsletters, policies and regulations) and related to student activities were reviewed (Creswell, 2014; Rubin & Rubin, 2012). These artifacts aided in the analysis process and served as an important example of how student affairs practitioners alter practices to enhance student engagement in their programs and activities.

Data Analysis

A deductive analysis approach was applied to guide the process of organizing the collected data (Yin, 2014). An interpretive analysis technique was implemented through three stages: deconstruction, interpretation, and reconstruction (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014). In the deconstruction stage, the raw data were assigned codes and categories to describe the content. In the interpretation stage, the focus was on understanding and making sense of the coded data by comparing codes and categories to identify similarities and differences. In the reconstruction stage, central themes emerged based on the interpretation of the coded and categorized data (Creswell, 2014; Miles et al., 2014; Rubin & Rubin, 2012; Yin, 2014).

The data analysis process began with review of the transcriptions of the interviews in order to identify actual words exchanged between participants and researcher (Creswell, 2014; Rubin & Rubin, 2012). Once the transcription process was complete, I organized all data by placing them into their original sources (interviews, personal notes, memos, and material culture). Then, I reviewed the data to examine the general meanings. This included identifying common and different ideas, coding the data, and organizing the coded data into small manageable categories for further analysis. This

process allowed categories to emerge naturally from the collected data (Creswell, 2014; Hsieh & Shannon, 2005; Patton, 2002 Rubin & Rubin, 2012; Yin, 2014).

I then wrote analytical memos to record the preliminary findings and to develop a codebook to be utilized during the analysis stage (Saldaña, 2009). The InVivo method was implemented during the coding process to allow use of the participants' own words and expertise to understand the phenomenon under study (Creswell, 2014; Saldaña, 2009). The raw data, organized by identifying codes and categories, generated overarching themes (Anfara, Brown, & Mangione, 2002; Creswell, 2014; Hsieh & Shannon, 2005; Mills, 2003; Rubin & Rubin, 2012; Saldaña, 2009). These themes addressed the main research questions, including how the student affairs practitioners viewed their work within the local cultural context in Qatar (Merriam, 1998).

Trustworthiness and Validity Threats

Trustworthiness for any research study is considered one of the essential conditions (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Trustworthiness can be achieved through several strategies, such as credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Creswell, 2013; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Stringer, 2014). Some of these strategies were employed to ensure the trustworthiness and validity of the study. First, a clear interview protocol was established, including the process for reviewing the material culture, in a clear connection to the research questions (Anfara et al., 2002; Creswell, 2012, 2013; Toma, 2006). This protocol and questions were pilot tested with non-student affairs staff to ensure their effectiveness and to make modifications as needed (Creswell, 2012, 2013). Second, member checking was used after transcribing the interviews by sharing the interview transcripts with the participants to confirm the data and to allow them to suggest

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corrections or additional insights (Creswell, 2014; Stringer, 2014; Toma, 2006). Finally,

the data from all sources, including the material culture review, were triangulated

(Creswell, 2013; Toma, 2006).

Ethical Considerations

I work for Weill Cornell Medicine-Qatar (WCM-Q), one of the American branch

campuses selected for this study. However, I do not currently serve in any supervisory

role in that institution's student affairs department. To avoid any conflict of interest, I

asked the assistant dean for student affairs to send the invitation to my colleagues at

WCM-Q to ensure that their participation was done on a voluntary basis. In addition, I

emphasized to all participants that identifying information would be kept confidential.

The collected data were stored in a secure server and will be destroyed after the study is

completed. Pseudonyms for the selected institutions and participants were used in

reporting the study in order to protect the identities of all participants.

Chapter 4

Results and Findings

This chapter presents the findings of the qualitative case study that was designed to explore the perceptions and understanding of student affairs professionals who are implementing Western student affairs practices within the local context in the State of Qatar. The study also explored possible best practices developed by these student affairs practitioners through their work in the IBCs in Qatar.

The chapter begins with a brief description of the participants, the themes and sub-themes that emerged from the study in connection with each research question, and examples of the participants' own words in support of each theme. Three research questions guided the study:

1. How do student affairs professionals alter their Western practices at IBCs in Qatar?

2. How do student affairs professionals describe the role of local culture in shaping the Western student affairs services implemented at IBCs in Qatar?

3. What best practices can emerge from the study findings to guide student affairs professionals working at IBCs in the Gulf Region?

Research Participants

I interviewed 14 individuals from September 19 through November 17, 2019 in Qatar and in the United States. The interviews ranged in length from 30 to 70 minutes. The same protocol, consisting of nine questions, was asked in all interviews, as described in Chapter 3. In addition, three participants provided the following material culture items: posters for events, policies for clubs and organizations, and promotional pamphlets

for leadership programs offered to their students.

All participants met the criteria: (a) were actively engaged with students by organizing student activities, (b) had worked at one of the American branch campuses for at least a year, (c) previously worked in the United States, and (d) completed their higher education in the United States. Each participant signed a consent form. All participants agreed to have the interview audio recorded to improve the data collection process. Member checking was conducted to verify the collected data (Creswell, 2014; Stringer, 2014; Toma, 2006).

Background of the participants. Many student affairs practitioners who work in Education City are from the United States; others have been hired locally. Some, but not all, have educational degrees and credentials from the United States. For the purpose of this study, only those student affairs practitioners who had been directly recruited by the institutions in Education City were interviewed, per the criteria established for participation.

In terms of current employment status, 4 participants were former employees in Education City and 10 were currently employed in Education City. There were six males and eight females. The participants worked at five American IBCs in Education City, Qatar. They served in various positions in students affairs, ranging from entry-level positions, such as program and events coordinators, to mid-level positions, such as assistant directors, and senior-level directors. Their length of employment ranged from 2 years to 12 years.

Lucas. Lucas worked in Education City for 9 years but had left recently to pursue new opportunities. He had been recruited to work in Education City from the United

States. In his role, he worked with advising the student government and student clubs and organizations, and he coordinated major student events, including orientation and the service-learning initiatives. Lucas cited major differences between his previous large campus in the United States and the IBC. He described the differences as "night and day," especially because of the small number of students and the quality of their interactions in the small IBC community. Lucas recalled his experience, highlighting changes that he had had to make and the importance of being respectful of the local culture and host country. He stated, "We are just kind of trying to be culturally mindful in general." He emphasized the importance of establishing strong relationships and encouraged student affairs practitioners to adjust their practices to meet their students' needs.

William. William served for 9 years in Education City but then left the position and currently works in the United States. His responsibilities in Education City included coordinating major events for the department, athletic programs, and the student conduct hearing process. He was recruited directly from the United States. William started his interview by discussing the high school preparations for students in the United States and students at his IBC. He concluded that his students at the IBC were less prepared to be involved in extracurricular activities and programs than were their counterparts in the United States. "Basically, they are much less experienced than what it had been my experience in working with students in U.S. schools." William highlighted the essential role of the family in his students' lives. For example, he stated, "There were a lot of expectations for students . . . to contribute to their families." William concluded by offering recommendations to student affairs professionals who are considering joining

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IBCs in Education City.

Sophia. Sophia has been employed in Education City for 12 years. She started to work in student affairs as the lead person, coordinating the design of their student affairs program. She is currently working in Education City in a different role. Sophia recalled early lessons that they learned together and noted that it was difficult to establish programs and events for her students. "Figuring out how to set up the students' activities was very challenging . . . students did not have a background in college activities and we did not have a background in activities in this culture." She highlighted cultural differences and explained how they influenced student behavior. "They [Education City students] are far more group oriented, less individualistic than the kids in the U.S." Similar to the other participants, Sophia confirmed the important role of the family in influencing student experiences. "Family constraints are huge . . . like sports and girls, you can really see the conflict." She mentioned this as an example of how families limited their daughters' participation in the college athletics programs.

Olivia. Olivia worked in Education City for 2 years, then left and is currently working in the United States. In her role in Education City, she oversaw the international service-learning opportunities and assisted international students with the immigration process in Qatar. Similar to Lucas, Olivia discussed the transition from a very large campus to a small campus. She expressed appreciation for the opportunity to work with a different student population. "There were 30 different nationalities represented at the institution. . . . I appreciated the opportunity to learn from students, a population that I haven't worked with previously." Olivia cited cultural differences and emphasized the important role of the family in students' lives. As an example, she recalled that parents

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had accompanied their daughters on international travel, something than Olivia had never experienced before. Throughout the interview, Olivia focused on the need to understand the local culture and context in order to be efficient as a student affairs practitioner working in an IBC. She stressed that student affairs practitioners cannot simply apply the practices that they used in the United States. "It takes a lot of time to learn the local culture and context to understand our job, to build those relationships."

James. James worked in Education City for 3 years, then left and is currently working in the United States. In his role in Education City, he managed the leadership development programs and coordinated major events across Education City. He recalled that he had noticed differences in the cultural context immediately after he started. As did other participants, he mentioned the family role in restricting student participation in some of the leadership opportunities, noting, "Maybe that wasn't something accepted by their families or in their cultures." James mentioned that many students did not fully understand or value the involvement opportunities outside the classroom. He attributed this to a lack of exposure to similar opportunities during high school. At the end of his interview, James mentioned the importance of intercultural training to improve student affairs competence skills. He recommended that IBCs provide such training, concluding, "Yes, 100%, I think that it should be a part of onboarding."

Logan. Logan has worked for 6 years in Education City and is currently serving as the advisor and coordinator for international programs. He also coordinates the athletic programs for his institution. He was recruited directly from the United States to work in Qatar. Logan started by comparing student populations between his IBC and the United States, highlighting cultural differences. For example, he cited the concept of time, which

was a challenge for him in adjusting to his new setting. "The most difficult to navigate and to adjust to is the concept of time." Logan also discussed the role of the family in the students' lives, the buy-in that is needed from students, and the importance of preparing student affairs staff members before they start their work at an IBC. He recommended, "Prepare people before they come out here, so they know what they are getting into and they know what is appropriate [within the local context]."

Jack. Jack has worked in Education City for 8 years. In his leadership role, he coordinates educational programs and manages student events conducted in Education City. He was recruited from the United States. Jack expressed early in the interview the challenge of unifying students who come from across the globe. However, he indicated that most of the students share some common things, such as religion and cultural background. "I think one unifying factor is that many of the students are Muslim . . . even from the Gulf region, so culturally there are some shared elements there." Similar to other participants, Jack highlighted the challenge of finding appropriate times to offer events and activities. He cited specific cultural differences and made suggestions on how to navigate them. For example, he discussed gender intermixing at events and stated, "What's the educational benefits of having a mixed-gender as opposed to single-gender? There are times where a single-gender [event] makes more sense." James concluded by noting that the local context in Qatar is completely different from the context in the United States. Based on those differences, he stated that he did not recommend applying U.S. practices to the local context in Education City or vice versa.

David. David has worked in Education City for 2 years. In his leadership role, he oversees the department of student affairs and all of its services to students. He also

supervises full-time professionals. He was recruited from the United States. Similar to other participants, David started his interview by discussing the high school preparation level for his IBCs students. He noted that their limited exposure to leadership opportunities in high school had an impact on their maturity and readiness for college involvement. "At times, it feels like a prep school or high school." David recalled a couple of incidents that he had experienced in dealing with cultural conflicts and commented that he had struggled with the situations because of his lack of knowledge of the cultural expectations. During these situations, he was approached by students or colleagues either to stop the music or to stop the program during prayer times. He concluded that it is very important to keep a balance between honoring the main campus culture and respecting the local culture and host country. "It's a delicate balance. . . . We try to finds ways as much as possible to blend and honor both."

Oliver. Oliver has worked in Education City for 2 years. He works in student affairs as an academic advisor. He also manages some of the academic programs and events for students. Oliver started by describing his students. Although they belong to various cultures, the majority are Muslim. Similar to other participants, Oliver emphasized the need to adjust practices to meet student needs. "We have to demonstrate sensitivity to their needs." Oliver also mentioned the impact of the local context on students' lives, which he had not experienced in the United States. For example, he mentioned the holy month of Ramadan and described how students must adjust to balance meeting their religious obligations and fulfilling their academic requirements. He is happy to assist his students in meeting this challenge. Oliver also focused on describing his transition and the cultural differences between Eastern and Western cultures. For

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example, he described himself as a direct communicator ("Even among Westerners, I am considered direct"). He recounted his struggle to use that skill in an Eastern culture that support indirect communication.

Amelia. Amelia was the only participant to have been recruited from a country other than the United States. However, she had been educated and had worked in the United States before joining her IBC in Qatar. Amelia is currently working in the student events area and is developing leadership initiatives for students. She has worked in Education City for 2 years. Amelia started her interview by comparing Eastern and Western cultures. "Our students come from . . . collectivist cultures; they tend to bring their cultures with them." She highlighted the impact of the local cultural on setting the context for student activities and programs. She emphasized need to respect the local cultural and host country, saying that the focus should be on "Finding ways to show consideration but also respect for our local culture and customs and religion and traditions."

Samantha. Samantha has worked in Education City for 6 years. She was recruited from the United States, and she is currently coordinating student leadership programs at her institution. Similar to Amelia, Samantha started by identifying the local culture as a collective society, in contrast to the United States. She cited some of the unwritten rules that are common in any society and stated that student affairs practitioners need to learn and acknowledge these rules to be successful. "There's a lot of unwritten culture rules that people can explain when they explain the how-to-do something here." At the end of the interview, Samantha recommended caution in following U.S. practices based on a presumption that that they are superior; rather, she

suggested keeping an open mind to learn how to adapt successfully to the new cultural

context.

      Kathy. Kathy has worked in Education City for 10 years. In her first role, she was

responsible for student activities and events on her campus. In her current role, she is

responsible for international students and study abroad initiatives. She also coordinates

the sports programs. Kathy began her interview by highlighting cultural differences and

describing her students within the local context in Education City. One of the major

differences that Kathy noted was how she views her students as very dependent on their

families. "Students here are more sheltered. Those apron strings are still connected."

Furthermore, Kathy talked about the importance of investing in building relationships.

This was very important to Kathy, as she felt that her students started to treat her

differently and trust her more. Kathy then focused on cultural impact on her programs

and events. For example, she mentioned that they do not have events on Friday because

of how this day is viewed in the local culture. "We don't program on a Friday. Friday is a

family day. Friday, people go to pray and they spend time with their family."

      Lina. Lina has worked in Education City for 4 years. She is responsible for

supporting international students and coordinating international service trips for her

institution. She was recruited directly from the United States. Lina started the interview

by reflecting on her interactions with students and how cultural differences played a role

in these interactions. For example, she mentioned that she prefers to communicate via

email but her students prefer face-to-face interactions in order to get to know her

personally. "They very much value that face-to-face interaction." Lina shared her

fascination with the concept of time. She noted that her students always plan things at the

last minute because they view time as a flexible entity. "It may not be as early as we want it, but it's all going to work out." She elaborated on this example, noting that it is acceptable to have different cultural values and that it is important that student affairs practitioners respect such values.

Emma. Emma has worked in Education City for 6 years. She was recruited from the United States and currently serves in a leadership position in her student affairs department. Emma started her interview by recalling that she had not been very aware of IBCs or the local cultural context in Education City when she arrived. "I did not quite know what to expect. . . . I did not understand the fact that [people in] Qatar . . . speak English widely." Emma cited differences in cultural aspects and described how she had modified some of her practices to meet the needs of her students. She noted that her adaptations "provide an inroad to engaging and to being more culturally relevant or religiously relevant." Emma concluded by offering recommendations for new student affairs staff members who are planning to join IBCs in the future. For example, she suggested, "Ask more questions, listen . . . don't impose your perspective or experiences."

Summary. The participants provided valuable information to address the research questions. Three main themes emerged related to the three research questions. Each main theme contained subthemes. The main themes and subthemes were supported directly by the participants' words.

Theme 1: The Role of the Local Culture

The participating student affairs practitioners who are working or had worked in the local context in Qatar confirmed that they had modified their Western practices to

become more suitable to the local cultural context. The three sub-themes related to the role of the local culture were (a) conservative cultural context, (b) respecting the local culture and the host country, and (c) involvement and engagement outside the classroom environment.

Conservative cultural context. The participating student affairs practitioners described the local context and noted how it influenced and shaped their work and relationships with students. Jack described the existing local culture in Education City and stated, "There's a home culture here, a home culture in terms of Qatar and Qatari culture, which is related to Islamic and Arabic culture." William mentioned that his local students are more strongly committed to their faith than are his U.S. students. "Muslim and Islam is so much more integrated in the student lives, than even students that I know in the US who consider themselves to be very religious." Oliver connected the same idea: "Certainly, there is majority Muslim population here with a variety of cultures that are connected in various ways to their faith." Jack similarly stated, "I think one unifying factor is many of the students are Muslim, or come from a Muslim family; maybe even from the Gulf region, so culturally there are some shared elements there."

In terms of how the students' faith influences their daily lives, Kathy described the influence as "strong." "It is vital. It holds a huge weight. These students pray before they make decisions. They pray before they go into a test. That spiritual component is really big for them. . . . It's a big component for students." Sophia noted that, in the United States, religious matters are usually kept private and not discussed in public, while in the Middle East religious matters are more public and are clearly expressed by Muslims. "In a deeper way, there's a stronger religious and cultural identity that is

manifested in behavior more here. In the United States, people can keep their religion

private . . . here, the linkages are more public and more clear."

Several participants explained the importance of prayer times and described how

they experienced this during their events. For example, David described a situation that

he had encountered during an event. They were coordinating a student event and playing

music in the background.

> One of my co-workers who had been here a longer time mentioned to me, "Hey,
>
> will you just pause it for a second? I will explain here in a second." So, I did. . . .
>
> there was a prayer time that was scheduled to happen. . . . And so during prayer
>
> time, we avoid playing any music.

As the participant further explained, he learned from his co-worker that music should not

interrupt the call for prayers or the prayers themselves. A similar situation happened with

Kathy.

> I was having a sports banquet and we're playing music and the students were like,
>
> "Turn off the music. Turn off the music." I'm like, "Why?" They were like, "It's
>
> prayer." I was like, "Oh okay." So then I heard they call the prayer and I was like,
>
> "Okay, shut it down. Shut down the music."

Several participants noted the limitations of having male-female interaction

during student events or generally in public. Emma explained the local cultural context

and how male-female interactions are viewed. "Culturally, being seen as a female with a

male publicly could have cultural implications about the perceptions that others have

about the interaction." She explained that relationships between genders are forbidden

before marriage.

David discussed the official greeting in the local culture, indicating that it would not be the same as the handshake in the United States. "I was certainly told that, unless a female extends their hand for a hello, then I should not extend mine and that it's perfectly acceptable just to put your hand on your heart or your chest."

Lina described a situation that took place during an activity that she planned with students.

> There was an ice breaker where you were meant to touch someone and instead of touching someone or holding hands you would hold pens, the ends of pens, so you didn't need to physically touch somebody else, especially in a co-gendered event.

> Over-all, a majority of the participants described the environment as conservative, strongly influenced by the Arab culture and the Islamic religion. These examples illustrated how the local culture and religion shaped the environment and the work of the student affairs practitioners in their IBC.

Respecting the local culture and host country. During the interviews, the majority of the student affairs practitioners expressed a clear commitment to respecting and honoring their local cultural context. Amelia discussed her process of planning events and how she considers the local context when she reviews the details of events. "I really have to consider my context. So, what kind of event is this going to be? Is this appropriate for the context, first of all?" Lucas highlighted challenges of explaining some laws and regulations form the United States, such as sexual assault and Title IX, without offending the students, parents, or the local community.

> How do we have a conversation with students around sexual assault without offending them? . . . So we have to figure out ways that we could have a

meaningful education conversation. We will also try to be as respectful as we

possibly could to our host country.

David highlighted the main goal and purpose of his work in Qatar. "I think that's our

biggest responsibility to being employees here in the state of Qatar, and being able to

bring the education and be part of the culture here respecting local laws, religions,

cultures that already existed here."

The participants clearly acknowledged the importance of respecting local cultural

norms, values, and beliefs. In addition, they were appreciative of the host country and

how mindful they should be to not offend the host country by introducing or

implementing programs that would conflict with the local cultural context.

Involvement and engagement outside the classroom. Several participants

indicated that many of their students were experiencing leadership opportunities outside

the classroom for the first time. William stated, "A lot of our students, when they got to

college, that was their first exposure to any kind of leadership opportunities . . . basically,

they're much less experienced than what it had been my experience working with

students in U.S. schools." Olivia mentioned that the concept of becoming involved

outside the classroom is a foreign idea. "It seems as though this idea in involvement is

more specific to the U.S. than it is international." Similarly, James indicated that the

concept of engagement outside the classroom is not known or acknowledged by the local

culture. "It'd be like, goes back to like, the cultural part…there wasn't as much of a value

[on]… outside of the classroom programming, but that's such a core part of like, US

higher education." The participant further explained that this made it more difficult for

students when they needed to explain their involvement to their parents or to ask

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permission to participate in a leadership opportunity.

The second issue that many of the participants indicated was related to how their students did not have basic exposure to leadership opportunities because these opportunities had not been available in their high schools, in contrast to their counterparts in the United States.

> You work at a school with a lot of students [who] will not get involved with organizations or athletics, or some kind of leadership position in high school so that … basically, they're much less experienced than what it had been my experience working with students in U.S. schools.

David described the maturity level of his local student. "At times, it feels like a prep school or high school when it comes to maybe some of the students' maturity level." Similarly, Sophia stated that he had to adjust his practices to meet his students' leadership level. A participant stated, "Figuring out how to set up student activities was very, very challenging. . . . The students did not have a background in college activities." She elaborated that she had to explain to the students the purposes of these activities and seek their interest in order to establish involvement programs for students.

As a result of the students not fully understanding the value of engagement outside the classroom (as emphasized in the United States) and not being prepared to become involved, many participants indicated that it was very challenging to engage their students in activities. Several participants described their environment as a "commuter college," where students attend classes and then go home. Olivia stated,

> It feels almost like a commuter campus where folks they come, and they're there to be students; they go to class and then they go home and it's a

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challenge to get student buy-in to that engagement outside of the classroom. James stated that his students tend to focus on academic work and ignore leadership involvement opportunities because they do not see these opportunities as important to their overall development as students do in the United States. "Outside of the U.S., the student is mostly focused on academics first and then maybe on the involvement second."

To summarize, the student affairs practitioners who participated in this study described their environment as very conservative, with culture and religion playing a significant role in defining accepted norms. The participants were consistent in indicating the importance of respecting local cultural beliefs and host country customs, traditions, laws, and regulations. The participants highlighted the challenges of engaging students in activities, as many were new to such a concept and did not see the value of such involvement. This may suggest reasons for adjustments that the participants made in their practices to ensure that programs and activities were relevant to their students.

Theme 2: Student Affairs Professional Practices

This theme highlighted differences between Eastern and Western cultures, according to the participants' perceptions. In general, the theme was that Western practices are generally not very effective in Eastern cultures. The three subthemes that emerged were (a) replicating Western practices is not effective, (b) differences between Eastern and Western cultures, and (c) gender interactions and mixing.

Replicating Western practices is not effective. Several participants mentioned push from their management to replicate experiences and traditions from their main campus in the United States in their local IBCs in the State of Qatar. The participants clearly agreed that this was not feasible or effective; they had to alter experiences and

traditions to fit the local context. Jack expressed his commitment to his students: "You can't just take what's in the U.S. and then implement it. It's not just a cut-and-paste kind of thing. . . . I still want to be culturally sensitive, and define what works in this context with these students." Samantha confirmed the same idea, comparing some routine things that she usually did in the United States with those in her new international environment. "You can't push the U.S. way of doing things out here . . . some things will just take 2 weeks where in the U.S. they may take 36 hours. And you can't push this. You can't change it." James highlighted the need for creating a local campus identity for the branch campus, instead of using the identity or culture from the main campus in the United States.

> I think it's a really flawed model for branch campuses to try to recreate the main campus because it's not possible. So, yes things will get adapted… [we should] push for more local practices rather than just adopting things from the main campus.

David discussed the delicate balance that he needed to establish between the two cultures (the home campus and the local community). "It's a delicate balance between … what I would call our campus culture and the country culture. And so we try and find ways as much as possible to blend and honor both." Logan mentioned the same concern and addressed the issue of preparing students to face the current and future challenges as they join the workforce and their local community. "That's always the balance of what is progress, what is engaging students, but not at the expense of losing the local cultural identity."

Overall, the participants agreed concerning the necessity to adopt or alter their practices to be more efficient and to meet the needs of their students. The participants also highlighted the necessary balance to honor and respect both cultures (home campus and host country).

Differences between Eastern and Western cultures. The participants elaborated on cultural differences between the United States and the Middle East, citing many examples in the interviews. William stressed the difference in how family expectations and obligations are viewed between Eastern and Western cultures. "[In the United States], most college students are trying to distance themselves from their families and gain that independence away from their families." However, he noted that, locally,

> Our students are very connected to their families even as college students . . . just
> culturally, the students had a lot more obligations with their family. . . . Parents
> still have much more say in terms of what their students did or did not do.

Emma highlighted the same fact in terms of the family role. "Parents still had control over that decision making . . . students having to ask permission from their families to do things like come back to campus in the evening or to do something on a weekend." James discussed how these family commitments have affected student participation in events.

> Family commitments seem to trump any of those extracurricular opportunities for
> students . . . their family just wasn't as supportive of it…I thought that was kind
> of an interesting difference … from like the traditional campus-based in the US.

The important role that family plays in students' lives was further explained by Amelia. "We have more of a collectivist culture. And our students come from these kind of collectivist cultures, they also tend to bring their cultures with them." Similarly, Kathy

added that, in a collectivist culture, the family unit is the main focus, not the individual person. "Students in the U.S. tend to be more individualistic in their approach or how they live their lives or make decisions. . . . This is one of the biggest differences between students in the U.S. and students in Qatar." Samantha confirmed the idea, stating that parents are well respected and play an important role in student lives, based on local cultural expectations.

> The students in Qatar are, because it's more of a collectivist culture in this part of the world than in the U.S. . . . I think the respect for the parents that is over here, that is taught, again, because of the collectivist culture.

The second issue that was highlighted in terms of cultural differences was the concept of time. The participants described how their students define time as "fluid" and "flexible," compared to the United States, where time is considered a valuable commodity that should be respected and not wasted. Sophia stated,

> We really struggled initially with concept of time and planning efficiency [for student events] . . . coming from the U.S., you do things far ahead, you have to do things in advance… Here, things work at far more, kind of a last-minute kind of way.

Lina described how her students responded when they were planning their events. "Things are more fluid. 'Oh, it will work out, like it's going to be fine. . . . It may not be as early as we want it, but it's all going to work out.'"

Logan highlighted the same challenge:

> The concept of time is [that] time is very fluid. So, time is merely a suggestion rather than a contract or a commitment. . . . When I say that something starts at

6:30 pm, you can probably show up at 6:45 and 7:00 and it would probably still

be okay.

Logan explained that he had experienced multiple challenges in having to adjust

the time for his local students and extending the program time because many of them

arrived late to participate in these events.

The third cultural issue described by participants was the importance of

establishing personal relationships with students. This entails spending the time to get to

know them before discussing business-related items. Lucas indicated the importance of

developing relationships in order to be successful. "In order to have any kind of

relationship with the students, it was incumbent on me to develop a personal relationship

. . . like the students require you to have a strong relationship with them first and do the

work later."

Kathy described a disconnect with her students when she started working and how

this changed over time as she built strong personal relationships with her students. "I

found … that, to get them more engaged and involved, it's about relationships. . . . I

learned that you really have to cultivate a relationship to be successful."

Emma explained how the relationship differs between the U.S. perspective and

the Middle Eastern perspective. "Culturally, the relationship is the foundation of so

much, whereas if you are like in the U.S., there's a lot of really transactional interactions

where it's like a, 'Okay thanks. Bye.'"

The participants addressed many cultural differences, including the family role,

the time concept, and the importance of establishing a relationship. This set the stage for

many of the adaptations or changes that these professionals have made to enhance their

services to meet the needs of their students.

Gender interactions and mixing. One of the areas that all participant addressed was that the co-gendered environment is different at IBCs in Education City from that in the United States. For example, many indicated that they offered both single-sex and co-gendered programming. Emma stated, "We also wanted to make sure there are spaces where women only and men only can also engage co-curricularly. . . so we have a student organization that is specifically for women."

Sophia highlighted the same concern and mentioned an event that involved traditional dancing. She said that they had to create a separate space, a private space, for the females so they could dance and participate fully in the event. "Obviously, the boys and girls couldn't be together. . . . The guys participated by doing the sound system, but they had to be in a separate room."

William described a question that the parents always asked him during new student orientation: whether their son or daughter would be studying in a co-gendered environment. "A question that still came up every year in terms of concerns about even boys and girls being in the classroom together, let alone them being in a sort of clubs and organizations together." He explained the challenge of engaging students in extracurricular activities, but agreed that making accommodations to have certain events single gendered was helpful, as well.

The majority of the participants cited these examples to illustrate that they have to adapt their practices to fit the local context. They also mentioned ways to advise staff members who are relocating to work in the Middle East. This information assisted in addressing the third research question.

Theme 3: Best Practices for IBCs in the Middle East

This theme highlighted many of the successful changes that the student affairs practitioner had adopted to make their services more relevant to their students. The theme included important recommendations by the participants for those who are considering work in IBCs in the Middle East region. Amelia best summarized this main theme in the following statement: "Everything is driven by the local context or the cultural context we are in." Two subthemes emerged related to this research question: (a) adopted successful student affairs practices, and (b) best practices for incoming staff.

Adopted successful student affairs practices. All 14 participants expressed deep commitment to their students' development and growth. They also indicated their flexibility to modify their practices to ensure that the practices meet their students' needs. This flexibility and adaptability seemed very important to these student affairs practitioners who work in IBCs. They agreed that it is a key to their success. Lucas stated, "If it's important to the students, you adapt to the culture. . . . We say, 'Meet the students where they're at.'" Samantha mentioned a similar perspective: "We learn that you have to meet students where they are, and kind of adjust to them."

Emma mentioned the importance of getting to know students in order to be effective in student affairs approaches and practices. "We need to be open and cognizant of that as well because this is the population that we are serving so we need to know them. We need to know what their needs are in order to meet them." Similar, William highlighted the same issue by mentioning the need to be flexible with the students' initial level of leadership skills, as an example. "Just in terms of meeting the students where they were with their leadership experience that they had coming in."

All 14 participants confirmed that they had modified their Western practices to be efficient, to be respectful of the local culture and host country, and to meet the needs of their students. The participants cited multiple examples of these modifications.

First example: Events and programs timing. The participants discussed in depth the struggle to determine the best time for their events, programs, and activities. For example, all participants agreed that they do not plan events for Friday, which is the Muslim holy day and family day. William stated, "For a Muslim student, that is something that they are very immersed in, the prayer times, we never did anything on Fridays to be accommodating to students."

The family commitment and obligation, as explained earlier, also limits the students' ability to participate, especially during the evening. Most participants indicated that they plan events to occur during the day, especially during class break time, to allow students to participate. For example, Olivia stated,

> Recognizing that it is difficult sometimes for students to be able to commit to participating in involvement opportunities outside their typical kind of classroom schedule. . . . There were a lot of programs during the day, especially over lunchtime. . . . Having it during the day it was better than at nights.

Oliver confirmed the idea and indicated that students do not attend any events that conflict with their scheduled classes.

> It should not interfere with the regularly scheduled courses of the day. Having it immediately after their final schedule session seems to be away to get the most participants. Asking them to come back several hours after classes are finished, is a recipe for disaster.

Many participants mentioned that students' families expect them to come home and to be with the family at dinner, which introduces difficulty in arranging evening and weekend events. Kathy noted, "We also don't program in the evenings; all of our programs are during the lunch break time from 12:00 to 2:00, because that's our break or block that we set aside for no classes."

Other participants offered ideas about student events. They mentioned restrictions in including music and public dance in their events. Sophia stated, "In terms of campus programming, we try to be mindful of music, we try to be mindful of dancing. . . . We try to pull back and make sure that we were not offending anybody, we aren't offending our host country." Similarly, Emma described a situation during one of her events. The students danced during the event, which had not been planned. Some students who were attending the event approached the practitioner and stated, "Oh, no, dancing is *haram* (forbidden according to Islamic teaching). You can't do it."

Second example: International travel opportunities. The second example mentioned by the participants was related to student international travel. Several participants mentioned the concept of having a family member travel with a student, especially a female student. According to one participant, an unmarried female is expected to travel with family members in accordance with Arabic cultural expectations. Olivia stated, "If they were able to participate, sometimes a family member would join on that trip, which is something that I've not experienced in the U.S. or New Zealand, where I worked before." This participant explained the difficulties of having female students participate in international service-learning or exchange opportunities. Many students are unable to convince their families or to have an available family member to travel with

them.

Emma highlighted the same issue and suggested flexibility to allow this accommodation in order to have the student travel on these opportunities. "Some of the international trips that some students would only be able to participate if their family attended as well. . . . We try to accommodate as long as the student is able to fully participate in the experience."

William argued that the same expectation (for having an escort accompany students) applied to evening and weekend events.

We made an allowance for students to be able to bring a guest because again it was an evening activity. . . . The concern was for our female students, if we didn't allow them to bring a guest with them, then they wouldn't be allowed to attend by their family.

Several participants cited the need to ensure that certain things happened during travel. For example, ensuring that Halal food (for Muslim students) is available and that students are allowed to pray at scheduled times. Samantha stated,

We would need to build in time while we were traveling for students to be able to pray in our daily itineraries. We had to be very careful about food and the available choices for students…making sure that the food they were getting was Halal.

Third example: The holy month of Ramadan. The third example that the participants highlighted was the holy month of Ramadan. During this month, Muslims fast during the day, only to break the fast at sunset. The local governmental laws do not allow food vendors to be open during the day during Ramadan, and it is prohibited to eat

in public during the day. The participants confirmed that most of their events could not take place during the month of Ramadan; they utilized other opportunities such as organizing Iftar to bring all students together. Kathy stated, "With orientation, if it's during Ramadan, we had no food and then have Iftar. . . . So we have to accommodate for that." Oliver discussed the impact on academics and arrangements that are made to accommodate Muslim students who are fasting. "During Ramadan, the class schedule changes. Days are often shortened. . . . I am not aware of many U.S. institutions that adjust their schedule during the holy month of Ramadan." All participants described the same general impact and noted that many events were planned without food or done after the Iftar time.

As I worked professionally in two separate IBCs in Education City, I encountered the same challenges as those faced by a student affairs practitioner. For example, the majority of the student events that I coordinated usually took place between 11:30 and 12:30 pm during the business day. Last year, I made a similar accommodation for a female student leader who was planning to attend a conference in the United States. We allowed her father to serve as a chaperone. In both IBCs where I worked, they made special arrangements during the month of Ramadan to accommodate students who were fasting. In general, all IBCs in Qatar follow the same practices and procedures.

Best practices for new incoming staff. Several participants reflected on their earlier experiences and indicated that it took some time to adjust, to learn their local cultural context, and to build strong relationships with their students. They agreed that much time is required to learn the local culture and context to build relationships. The participants offered other recommendations for new staff.

First, it was recommended that new staff be patient, observe the environment, and not make any assumptions; instead, ask questions. Logan suggested, "Just try to observe everything. Like with any culture, try to not assign good or bad meaning to anything; just kind of observe everything."

Second, it was recommended that new staff be open minded, not automatically applying previous experiences and perspectives to the new local context. David suggested "being open-minded. Realizing that, just because you are used to doing things in a certain way may not be the best way to do it here." Emma suggested, "Ask more questions. Listen, don't tell. Don't impose your perspectives or experiences on this place and be willing to listen and learn."

Third, it was recommended that new staff not make any immediate changes. Rather, it was suggested to experience all of the events for a full 1-year cycle and ask questions during this process. Jack suggested, "Try not to change anything. . . . Go through a cycle with the traditional events, with all the things that happen, just to understand the full cycle." William noted, "Unless you understand the full context of why it is the way it is, it's hard to make changes."

Fourth, it was recommended that new staff learn about the culture and local context and adjust practices accordingly. For example, the new staff member should be aware of family obligations and how to accommodate those expectations so the student can participate fully in events and programs. Amelia suggested "adjusting the theory and practice, applying it to a different cultural and context."

Fifth, it was recommended that new staff focus on building relationships with students from the first day of service. Emma stated, "the relationship is the foundation of

so much."

Sixth, it was recommended that new staff look for opportunities to develop cultural competency, if it is offered by the institution. James stated, "Do I think training on cultural competence and contacts would be valuable? Yes, 100%. I think that should be part of onboarding."

Samantha recommended the following for incoming staff:

I would say is if you chose to come here and you're a U.S. citizen, then just be really careful about thinking that the U.S. is superior, or you're better than these local people or those types of things. I think sometimes people come here, and they don't want to change their way of life at all. You can't really do that if you move to another country. So I think you need to be open minded and be willing to grow and adjust and change even if it is the same institution that you worked for in the U.S., knowing that it is going to be a really different experience. And you have to be open minded and be willing to change and adjust yourself to how the culture is so that you can thrive there.

Summary of the Results

This chapter presented findings related to each of the three research questions that guided this study. The qualitative analysis resulted in eight major themes, all of which addressed the services offered by student affairs practitioners in IBCs in Qatar.

Related to first major theme, the participants described how their local environment and cultural context are shaped. The local context is influenced by the Arabic culture and Islamic religion. Students were described as having had only limited experience with leadership involvement opportunities outside the classroom when they

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enrolled at the IBCs. The participants clearly agreed that they are committed to respect the local cultural context and their host country's traditions, culture, laws, and regulations.

Related to the second major theme, participants discussed that replicating Western student affairs practices within their local context was not efficient or effective in meeting student needs. Participants discussed in detail the differences between Western and Eastern cultures. They cited multiple examples, such as the impact of family expectations, to illustrate these differences. They described gender interactions and mixing during student events as limited and restricted by local cultural norms.

Related to the third major theme, participants described successful practices that they had implemented after modifying their Western approaches to fit the local context. All participants agreed that they had to make modifications to meet local needs of their students. They cited three successful approaches for revising their practices: events and programs timing, international travel opportunities, and the holy month of Ramadan. They presented six specific recommendations for approaches that should be adopted by incoming student affairs practitioners who are relocating to work in the Middle East region.

All participants in this study had been exposed to a new environment that challenged their established Western practices and opened the door to developing new approaches to assist their students. The commitment by the participant to serve their students led them to think creatively and establish or modify practices to meet the needs of their students.

Chapter 5

Discussion

The focus of this study was to examine and understand Western student affairs practices implemented in the six American IBCs within the local cultural context in the State of Qatar. The study also addressed modifications that student affairs professionals made to adopt their practices to meet local students' needs. Additionally, the study explored possible best practices that could be adopted by new student affairs professionals who are in transition to join IBCs in the Middle East region. Some participants contended that these practices could also be adopted at other IBCs, as well.

The chapter begins by reporting results to address the research questions, followed by analysis and discussion of findings, the role of the theoretical framework in explaining the findings, implications for practice, and recommendations for future research.

Results for Research Questions

This study was focused on Western student affairs practices as they are implemented or adapted in Education City, Qatar. The findings from the qualitative interviews suggest that student affairs practitioners have altered Western practices in consideration of the local cultural context and the needs of their local students. Many of the participants reflected on their practices and experiences and shared lessons that they had learned that could assist new student affairs practitioners with their transition to IBCs in the Middle Eastern region.

Research question 1: The role of the local culture. The first research question was, *How do student activities professionals describe the role of local culture in shaping*

Western student affairs services implemented on their branch campuses? All of the

participants highlighted the strong influence of the local culture and religion on their

students' interests and participation in extracurricular activities offered by the student

affairs offices. For example, one of the major topics that participants discussed and

highlighted during the interviews was the significant role of the family in students' lives.

William described the strong role of the family in values and cultural differences between

Eastern and Western cultures. "[In the United States], most college students are trying to

distance themselves from their families and gain that independence away from their

families. . . . [In Qatar], our students are very connected to their families even as college

students." Amelia and Kathy confirmed the idea but directly characterized the local

society as collective in nature versus the United States being an individualistic society.

Amelia stated, "We have more of a collectivist culture . . . they [students in Qatar] also

tend to bring their cultures with them." Kathy said, "Students in the U.S. tend to be more

individualistic in their approach or how they live their lives or make decisions. . . This is

one of the biggest differences between students in the U.S. and students in Qatar."

Participants indicated that parents exerted a strong influence in the decision-

making process, especially regarding being involved outside the classroom. William

stated, "Parents still have much more say in terms of what their students did or did not

do." Emma confirmed the idea: "Parents still had control over that decision making . . .

students having to ask permission from their families to do things like come back to

campus in the evening or to do something on a weekend." Similarly, James discussed

how family obligations influence the student's ability to participate in extracurricular

activities, especially in cases where conflicts existed. "Family commitments seem to

trump any of those extracurricular opportunities for students . . . their family just wasn't as supportive of it."

These student affairs professionals were concerned about the possibility of some of their Western practices offending the local culture, students and colleagues, and the host country. Thus, they were considerate in planning and implementing programs and activities and were careful to make appropriate modifications. For example, Amelia discussed how she considered local cultural values and traditions, especially when planning events, to avoid any signs of disrespect. She stated, "I really have to consider my context. So, what kind of event is this going to be? Is this appropriate for the context, first of all?" Similarly, Lucas discussed some of the legal language used openly in the United States that might be considered as offensive in the local culture, such as *sexual assault*. He stated that he needed to be indirect in stating such language.

> How do we have a conversation with students around sexual assault without
> offending them? [Students]. . . So we have to figure out ways that we could have
> a meaningful education conversation. We will also try to be as respectful as we
> possibly could to our host country.

David highlighted similar concerns and stated that student affairs practitioners have an important responsibility to deliver educational programs that fit the local context and meet student needs. "I think that's our biggest responsibility to being employees here in the State of Qatar, and being able to bring the education and be part of the culture here respecting local laws, religions, cultures that already existed here."

There was a clear consensus by participants that the local cultural context significantly influences their work and practices. As many of them emphasized,

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"meeting the students where they are" is an essential philosophy in their approach to working with students in IBCs.

      Research question 2: Student affairs professional practices. The second research question was, *In what ways do student activities professionals alter their Western practices at IBCs in Qatar?* All participants agreed on the importance of altering practices to meet the needs of students. One participant stated, "If it's important to the students, you adapt to the culture." All participants confirmed that they modified events and programs to be suitable and relevant to their students. For example, many participants mentioned that they accommodated cultural expectations by allowing students to have a family escort during participation in international opportunities, such as service-learning trips. Emma was extremely supportive, as were other participants, and allowed such a practice to ensure that her students were not disadvantaged by not being able to participate. "Some of the international trips that some students would only be able to participate if their family attended as well. . . . We try to accommodate as long as the student is able to fully participate in the experience." Similarly, William was very supportive of allowing students to have a family escort, especially for events taking place in evenings and on weekends. He stated,

> We made an allowance for students to be able to bring a guest because again it
> was an evening activity. . . . The concern was for our female students, if we didn't
> allow them to bring a guest with them, then they wouldn't be allowed to attend by
> their family.

      Another example was related to the limitations for gender interactions within the local cultural context, which shaped student events. For example, many participants

indicated that they offered a mix of single-sex and co-gendered programming. Emma explained that sometimes it makes more sense to have all-female events versus all-male events or have mixed events. "We also wanted to make sure there are spaces where women only and men only can also engage co-curricularly. . . so we have a student organization that is specifically for women."

Sophia described one of her events that involved a traditional dance; she related that they had to create a private space for the female students separate from male students so they could participate fully in the event. "Obviously, the boys and girls couldn't be together. . . . The guys participated by doing the sound system, but they had to be in a separate room." Sophia provided an event poster demonstrating the separation between male and female students by having two separate locations for the event.

The participating student affairs practitioners discussed the importance of creating a balance between practices and philosophies that were derived from their main campuses in the United States and local values, customs, and practices. As David indicated, referring to U.S. and Arab cultures, it is important to find a balance in implementing U.S. practices within the local cultural context. "It's a delicate balance. . . . We try to find ways as much as possible to blend and honor both." Furthermore, some participants highlighted the importance of initiating local traditions to create a unique identity for their branch campus and its students. The material culture artifacts collected from participants illustrated modifications made by the participants to make their events and programs relevant to the local cultural context. For example, William showed a parent's agreement form needed for international travel, regardless of the student's legal age, to demonstrate the parental influence during these processes.

Research question 3: Best practices for IBCs in the Middle East. The third

research question was, *What best practices can emerge from the study findings to guide*

student activities professionals working at IBCs in the Middle East Region? As the

participants reflected on their experiences and changes that they had adopted, they cited

successes in some of their approaches. For example, the majority agreed that it was

important to change the timing of events offered to their students. They reported that

they scheduled most of their events during the day, rather than in the evening, due to

family obligations that students were expected to fulfill.

Participants noted major challenges in replicating culture from their main U.S.

campuses on the IBC campuses. Many agreed that such a practice is neither efficient nor

practical in terms of the goals of student affairs professionals. For example, Jack

indicated that it is not effective to implement practices or campus traditions from the

home campus in the United States to the branch campus located overseas. "You can't just

take what's in the U.S. and then implement it. It's not just a cut-and-paste kind of thing."

Similarly, James stated that IBCs should not be focused solely on reinventing experiences

from their home campuses. "I think it's a really flawed model for branch campuses to try

to recreate the main campus because it's not possible." Other participants were more

direct and stated that student affairs practitioners should not force any Western practices

on the local cultural context because it might lead to negative outcomes. For example,

Samantha stated, "You can't push the U.S. way of doing things out here. . . . Some things

will just take 2 weeks where in the U.S. they may take 36 hours. And you can't push this.

You can't change it."

As a result, the majority of the participants recommended flexibility and balance between adopting some home campus practices and implementing some modified events to be relevant to the local culture. For example, David indicated the importance of achieving a balance for honoring both cultures. "It's a delicate balance between . . . what I would call our campus culture and the country culture." Other participants mentioned the importance of adjusting Western practices to meet the needs of students. For example, Lucas stated, "If it's important to the students, you adapt to the culture. . . . We say, 'Meet the students where they're at.'"

The participants reflected on how they had revised their practices to implement successful programs. They highlighted three examples to illustrate the importance of adjusting these practices: evening specific timing, accommodating certain requests during international travel opportunities, and holding events during the holy month of Ramadan.

Participants offered six recommendations for new staff members who are joining IBCs in the Middle East. The majority of these recommendations were intended to assist new staff members with the transition in understanding the new cultural context and establishing meaningful connections with students. Some of these recommendations focused on observing the cultural context, not making immediate changes without fully understanding why local practices had been established, and searching for opportunities to develop their own cultural competencies. For example, David stated, "Be open-minded. Realizing that, just because you are used to doing things in a certain way may not be the best way to do it here." William added, "Unless you understand the full context of why it is the way it is, it's hard to make any changes."

Discussion and Analysis

In the previous chapters, I highlighted the literature from Education City and from around the world addressing IBC operations, cultural differences between the IBC and the host country and related challenges, and the important work by student affairs professionals around the world. In this section, I review significant themes that were introduced in Chapters 1 and 2 and discuss how they connect to the study findings.

The role of the local culture. Some of the participants highlighted how some of their students did not fully understand the purpose of student affairs or the activities implemented outside the classroom. As a result, they were not fully engaged in these activities and programs. The participants indicated that one of the main reasons was the lack of student exposure to these activities during their high school which is limited within the local cultural context. The reports prepared by UNESCO (2009) have explained the same concerns, especially within the Gulf Region. In these reports, the students and their parents did not fully understand the purpose of student affairs nor the services and programs offered by the student affairs practitioners (Callahan, 2016; UNESCO, 2009).

Another important area that all participants highlighted was the strong family structure in which the parents play a significant role in setting expectations for their children (Ayubi, 1991; Barakat, 1993; Nejem, 2016; Zaharna, 1995). For example, in a study by Bakken (2013), the parents played an important role in influencing their students' decision to apply to the IBCs in Qatar. The participant in this study reported having encountered this cultural characteristic regarding family expectations and obligations. For example, several participants mentioned that their students "disappear"

immediately after classes because they are expected to be at home to interact with siblings and to be at the dinner table. The participants described how family expectations have limited students' ability to participate in student affairs programs and activities. For example, many students have difficulty in explaining to their parents the available international leadership opportunities, particularly those that involve overnight participation. In some cases, a family member travels with the student, especially with a female student. The study findings confirmed the clear impact of the family on student participation in leadership experiences outside the classroom and the need for student affairs practitioners to adjust their approaches to accommodate and support their students. Furthermore, these opportunities were considered by the parent s to be extracurricular activities than curricular activities.

Two other important Arab cultural values were highlighted by the participants: (a) the value of establishing a strong relationship with the students, and (b) gender interactions. The majority of the participants agreed that establishing personal and trusting relationships was extremely important in connecting with and working with their students. One participant emphasized that it was important to spend time in getting to know his students before discussing the business on hand. Another participant described a complete change in attitude toward her by her students as they stopped viewing her as an "outsider" and began to trust her. The value of the personal relationship can be explained by the strong collective values that Eastern cultures exhibit, especially in the Middle East region (Hofstede, 2001; Minkov, 2011; Nejem, 2016; Neuliep, 2015; Nisbett, 2003; Storti, 1999; Ting-Toomey, 1999).

With regard to gender interactions, the Gulf region was identified as very conservative, limiting interactions between males and females outside of specific family approval and supervision (Ayubi, 1991; Barakat, 1993; Nejem, 2016; Zaharna, 1995). The participants highlighted this concern and stated the need to create a balance between opportunities for single-sex programming and co-gendered programming. Some participants reported that they designate some spaces in their academic building for women-only events and allocate other areas for gender interaction. These participants viewed this practice as an extension of the cultural values that are imbedded in the local community and a recognition of the importance of respecting such values.

Eastern cultures have many general values that were discussed by the participants in this study. Eastern cultures value flexibility with time, indirect communications, and harmony and saving face; there is a general belief that people have limited control over their lives (Hofstede, 2001; Minkov, 2011; Nejem, 2016; Neuliep, 2015; Nisbett, 2003; Storti, 1999; Ting-Toomey, 1999). The participants in this study reported that they have observed many of these values in their work environment and in their local community. For example, several participants expressed fascination or frustration about how the local culture addressed the concept of time. The participants explained that they did not expect logistical arrangements for their events to be successful at the last minute, without advance preparation. On the other hand, some were frustrated by this concept, reporting that they struggle in coordinating events for students who do not arrive on time or who complete tasks at the last minute. In general, they stressed the need to be flexible in dealing with all cultural differences, such as the concept of time.

Student affairs practitioners. *Culture* was defined as the common values, beliefs, and shared language recognized and upheld in a specific community (Nakayama & Yep, 2001). Misunderstanding and conflict usually occur when cultural norms are not clearly understood or followed in the community (Ting-Toomey, 1999). Student affairs professionals can be challenged if they are not familiar with their students' values and beliefs and the local cultural context (Moscaritolo et al., 2016; NASPA, 2016c; Otten, 2003; Stryker et al., 2016; UNESCO, 2002). The participants share several stories that demonstrated these challenges. For example, a couple of participants said that they had not fully understood requests from students or colleagues to stop playing music or to take a break during prayer times. The cultural norms in this local context recognized the importance of such requests. Although some participants clearly lacked knowledge of some local customs and the need to conform to them, the findings of this study showed a clear desire on the part of these student affairs practitioners to respect the local culture, religion, and host country traditions. They were learning the details and significance of such norms and they were learning how to acknowledge and respect them.

A few participants cited a need for training to improve their cultural competence. Several scholars have highlighted this important issue, especially for the student affairs staff who are relocating to work internationally (Ciobanu, 2013; Deardorff, 2016a; Moscaritolo et al., 2016; Osfield & Associates, 2008; UNESCO, 2002). It is imperative that student affairs practitioners actively engage in opportunities to enhance their skills and competencies in order to understand their local cultural context (Ciobanu, 2013; Deardorff, 2016a; UNESCO, 2002). Although the participants agreed on the need for such cultural training opportunities, they stated that such opportunities were not directly

provided by their IBCs. They were forced seek such opportunities to advance their skills and abilities on their own.

Student affairs practices at IBCs. The study findings clearly showed agreement by all participant practitioners regarding the need to be flexible in their practices and approaches.   Several researchers have confirmed the importance of this issue, describing how IBCs in general should establish a balance between replicating practices from home campuses and adapting them to the host country's cultural context (Altbach et al., 2009; Farrugia & Lane, 2013; Shams & Huisman, 2012; Stryker et al., 2016). Failure to achieve such a balance can lead to accusations of disrespect for host country values and traditions by the IBC (Altbach et al., 2009; Farrugia & Lane, 2013; Shams & Huisman, 2012). Participants discussed this balance in detail and agreed that that they are providing "Western" education within the local cultural context in Qatar. They also emphasized that focusing solely on "American" approaches or supporting an assumption that "US is superior or better" will not make student affairs programs successful in international work at IBCs. Shams and Huisman (2012) argued that forcing such approaches can be viewed as a type of cultural imperialism or a new form of colonization.

Deardorff Intercultural Competence Theoretical Framework

Although the purpose of this study was not to examine directly the student affairs practitioner's intercultural competence, this framework guided the study and provided insight into student affairs practitioners' decisions to alter their practices. The stages characteristics of the Deardorff (2012) model partially explain the developmental level of the participants and why they behave in certain ways when they encounter cultural

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challenges.

For example, a couple of participants in their second year of service reported that they were still experiencing challenges in dealing with and accepting cultural differences in their work environment. David cited challenges that he had encountered when implementing his programs and events; he said that he was still struggling to understand some of the cultural differences. He wondered, "Why is this happening?" He also stated that he had to rely on colleagues and students to teach him about some important cultural norms, such as stopping the music during prayer time. Logan mentioned his struggle in adjusting to several cultural differences. He highlighted the concept of time as the greatest challenge. "I think the element of local culture that is the most difficult to navigate and adjust to is the concept of time." In both instances, David and Logan were still in the "attitudes" stage of the Deardorff model, as they were going through the initial adjustment period and working on developing a sense of curiosity and openness to examine and explore cultural differences.

On the other hand, participants who had worked for a long time in Education City clearly indicated that they had developed intercultural competence and had moved in the model to advanced stages. For example, participants who had worked in Education City for more than 6 years had advanced to the "skills" stage, as their answers and self-reflections demonstrated their ability to process and reflect on the cultural differences that they observed. Amelia was not only able to reflect on the student behaviors but was also able to connect them to Eastern cultural values, such as collectivism. She stated, "We have more of a collectivist culture. And if our students come from these kind of collectivist cultures, they also tend to bring their cultures with them." James reflected

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critically on the larger picture of how the IBCs were focusing on replicating cultural experiences from their home campus instead of developing their own cultural identity. "I think it's a really flawed model for branch campuses to try to recreate the main campus. . . . It's not possible and that takes away the opportunity of the local campus to create their own culture."

The study findings were consistent with the stages of the Deardorff (2006, 2012) model and explained why and how participants handled their practices to make them relevant to the local cultural context. The findings also suggested the importance of developing such skills or abilities to establish meaningful connections with local students.

Implications for Practice

This study was designed to examine Western student affairs practices implemented or adapted at IBCs in the State of Qatar. The study also examined modifications made by student affairs practitioners to make such practices relevant to the local cultural context. The study findings confirmed that participants did not fully follow the practices that they had learned and utilized previously in the United States.

The participants argued that cultural differences were the main reason for adapting and forming new practices. They mentioned the importance of connecting and meeting the needs of local students. As this study was focused on determining whether local culture exerted an influence on student affairs practices, more research is needed to determine how to prepare practitioners to work in IBCs. This process can start at the recruitment stage and continue through the onboarding and settlement stages.

Several participants indicated the need for more targeted and intentional training opportunities to enhance their intercultural competence. The faculty members who

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participated in Jauregui's (2013) study confirmed that developing intercultural competencies skills helped them to understand their students and the local context. As a result, they enhanced student learning experiences in their classrooms (Jauregui, 2013). Student affairs practitioners should invest in enhancing their intercultural skills and competence to improve programs and events. Further research is needed in this area to determine the best methods to train student affairs practitioners who are recruited to work in IBCs worldwide.

The recommendations provided by participants could be very effective in preparing newly recruited staff in their transition. The recommendations could also encourage establishment of local "community of practice" forums to serve as support groups during the transition. It is important to acknowledge that transitions between Western and Eastern cultures can cause difficulties and present challenges because of significant differences.

Implications for Research

Research on student affairs practitioners' experiences in IBCs is very limited. This study focused on determining whether student affairs professionals encountered challenges as they moved their Western practices outside the United States. This opened the door for many possible future studies that can be implemented to expand the study of this phenomenon.

First, further research is needed to assess how to prepare student affairs practitioners to work in IBCs outside the United States. Many participants reported that they had not been well prepared and had not anticipated the new environment in which they would serve. Some, such as David and Logan, were still struggling with their

transition. Emma mentioned that she had been surprised when she moved to Qatar to discover that many in the community spoke English very well. As noted in this study by Jauregui (2013), it can be useful to determine whether student affairs practitioners would be benefit from informal and formal cross-cultural training opportunities to improve their cultural competence, which could lead to enhancing programs and activities offered to local students.

Second, further research is needed to identify students' perceptions of the best practices that student affairs practitioners should adopt and implement. For example, students in Bakken's (2013) study in Education City, Qatar, expressed hesitation to engage in extracurricular activities that they felt violated their cultural or religious beliefs. The participants in the current study mentioned that, in some cases, their students approached them to make these requests. This may suggest the need to make further adjustments or modifications to activities and programs to make them suitable for local students and the local cultural context. Another study could be implemented to seek student feedback that could be very useful in assisting student affairs practitioners in their future approaches.

Third, many of the participants highlighted external factors that made it challenging to engage their students in their activities and programs. One of these concerns was student preparation and engagement in high schools before joining these IBCs. Further research may be helpful in determining whether such preparation, similar to U.S. high school experiences, could be helpful in the student transition and engagement in extracurricular activities in higher education.

Implications for Leadership and Leadership Theories

Leadership can serve as an important process to guide people to achieve their goals, mission, and vision. Leadership involves a relationship between leaders and followers in which both can equally influence the outcomes of the process. Leadership theories inform ways to work together as leaders and followers to achieve desired goals and outcomes (Hughes et al., 1995; Kelly, 1995; Northouse, 2012; Rost, 1995). Higher education can play an important role in modeling how the leadership process is implemented, especially for generations who will lead society in the future. Hence, these institutions must invest time and effort to develop students, faculty, and staff by recognizing how the leadership process is carried out and accomplished.

Implications for leadership. This results of this study suggest that preparing student affairs practitioners who are deciding to work in IBCs may be beneficial in terms of the cultural transition that they must undergo. For example, some participants mentioned that they had not known what to expect before their arrival and/or had not been aware of the important cultural norms that impacted their events.

Transformational leadership (TL) can play an important role in establishing a shared process with goals that are shared by leaders and followers. TL acknowledges followers' needs and the shared plan to address these needs. In addition, TL promotes creation of collaborative approaches that focus on mutual goals. Leaders aim to influence followers through ethical, intellectual and inspirational practices (Burns, 1995; Couto, 1995; Megerian & Sosik, 1996; Shields, 2010). Exercising TL in IBCs can create a supportive environment that encourages both the senior management and the student affairs practitioners to generate common solutions to address the changes that are needed

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in practices and approaches. A successful example mentioned by several participants is that their senior leaders have established an open period during the business day to engage students in feedback on activities and programs.

Another important area that senior leaders can explore with their current staff is how to prepare incoming staff. Utilizing TL, senior leaders can work together with their current staff to establish training programs to educate the new staff about the local cultural context before and/or soon after their arrival. According to Deardorff's (2006, 2012, 2016a, 2016b) intercultural framework, only intentional structured programs utilizing a developmental framework can be successful in enhancing participants' intercultural skills and competencies. Such programs can be implemented in advance (during the recruitment process) to prepare new staff before their arrival. Additional development opportunities should be considered to continue the growth and development process for the staff, based on recommendations by participants in this study.

Implications for leadership theories. Leadership scholars in the United States have focused mostly on creating theories that were socially constructed to address leadership development in the Western cultural context (Chemers, 1995; Ciobanu, 2013; Couto, 1995; Goleman, 1998; Magolda, 2003; Shields, 2010). For example, the majority of Western leadership theories promote the individual development approach to encourage student independence and self-reliance. This fits well in Western culture, which promotes individuality; however, this would not work effectively in Eastern cultures, which promote collectivism. This may be problematic for student affairs practitioners who leave the United States to work in IBCs worldwide. The main concern is how Western practices based on Western leadership theory may be applicable outside

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the borders of the United States. Even though this study was not designed to explore application of Western leadership theory, the participants clearly implied that application of Western theories in their practices would not be effective or efficient in international settings.

As the IBCs movement continues to expand worldwide, there will be a need to develop leadership theories that will guide student affairs practices to become more applicable and transformable to a wide range of cultures and countries around the world. These theories shape student affairs practitioners' work and the leadership programs that they offer to students. More research is needed to develop such applicable theories to enhance student affairs practices around the globe.

Conclusion

As the IBC phenomenon has continued to grow globally, there is a need for research to identify best practices for IBC operations. This study's findings showed that Western student affairs practitioners who were recruited in the United States to work in IBCs in Qatar experienced many challenges in implementing and adapting their programs and activities. They have modified many practices to fit the local cultural context. The participant student affairs practitioners highlighted the importance of being respectful of local cultural and host country values and traditions.

The findings also confirmed cultural differences between the IBC's home country and the host country in the Middle East. The student affairs practitioners had to learn these cultural values differently, and all emphasized the need to be adaptable and flexible in such environment. They made recommendations that can be utilized by new student affairs practitioners who are moving to work in an IBC in the Middle East region.

More research is needed to determine how to prepare and train student affairs practitioners to work in environment that are different from the ones that they experienced in the United States. Student affairs practitioners must seek opportunities to develop and enhance their intercultural competence so that their practices are relevant and meet the needs of their local students.

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Appendix

Interview Questions

1. Tell me about your work with the students on your campus.

2. In what ways is the student population on your campus different from the student population in the United States?

3. Describe a student event that you recently planned or attended on your campus or in Education City.

4. In what ways, if any, does the local cultural context shape the planning and implementation of your student events, activities, and programs?

5. In what ways, if any, does the Islamic religion influence the planning and implementation processes of the student activities on your campus or in Education City?

6. What are the main factors that motivate your students to engage in student activities?

7. Tell me about the learning objectives, if any, for student activities on your campus.

8. Have you made any special arrangements to accommodate a specific student's participation in an event? If so, how?

9. Reflecting on your experiences, what changes have you made in practices or what changes would you like to make in the future for planning your events/programs/services?

10. Is there anything that I should have asked you but did not?