

THE INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL AND CULTURAL CAPITAL OF STUDENTS IN  
PRIVATE HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION ON  
STUDENTS' SATISFACTION

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UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MALAYSIA

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To my beloved mother, who did not live to witness this day  
but I believe she would be very proud.

To my dear wife, who gave me constant support,  
encouragement, and patience.

To my sons and daughter, who are my source of  
joy and gladness.

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## **ABSTRACT**

Stiff competition in the higher education sector demands the institutions of higher education to pay more attention in evaluating the overall students' satisfaction and institution loyalty. The theory of push and pull is one of the motivation theories which explains why students pursue higher education and choose a specific higher education institution (HEI). The main purpose of this study is to develop an integrated model to understand college students' behaviour and try to extend the theoretical and empirical evidence on the causal linkages between the push and pull motivations, the social and cultural capital of student and institution, the overall student's satisfaction, and the HEI loyalty. This study was conducted in Saudi Arabia by a representative of students from developing countries. The scope of the study covers private higher education institutions in two big Saudi cities. A cluster sampling followed by a judgment sampling was employed to identify the study respondents. A total of 720 questionnaires were distributed and the analysis was based on 569 usable questionnaires. Two main statistical tools were used, i.e., SPSS 21 and AMOS 21. The findings of the current study support seven out of nine hypotheses. The final structural model results presented evidence that the relationship between push motivations and the overall student's satisfaction as well as pull motivations and the overall student's satisfaction are statistically supported. In addition, the relationship between the overall student's satisfaction and HEI loyalty is significant. The moderation role of the social and cultural capital of institution between pull motivations and overall student's satisfaction is supported. However, the moderation role of the social and cultural capital of student between push motivations and overall student's satisfaction is not supported. The results of this study should help higher education marketers to develop marketing strategies to attract college students and encourage persistence at HEI. Managerial implications are discussed, as well as several potential recommendations for future studies are identified and a conclusion is drawn.

## ABSTRAK

Persaingan yang sengit dalam sektor pendidikan tinggi, menuntut institusi pendidikan tinggi memberikan lebih perhatian dengan menilai secara menyeluruh kepuasan pelajar dan kesetiaan mereka terhadap institusi. Teori faktor tolak dan tarik merupakan salah satu teori motivasi yang menjelaskan mengapa pelajar melanjutkan pelajaran ke peringkat tinggi dan memilih institusi pengajian tinggi (HEI) tertentu. Tujuan utama kajian ini adalah untuk membangunkan satu model bersepadu bagi memahami tingkah laku pelajar kolej dan cuba untuk memperluaskan teori dan bukti empirik pada hubungan sebab-musabab antara motivasi tolak dan tarik, modal sosial dan budaya pelajar dan institusi, keseluruhan kepuasan pelajar dan kesetiaan terhadap HEI. Kajian ini dijalankan di Arab Saudi dengan respondennya merupakan pelajar yang mewakili negara-negara membangun. Skop kajian ini meliputi institusi pengajian tinggi swasta di dua buah bandar besar Saudi. Pensampelan kelompok diikuti dengan pensampelan pertimbangan telah digunakan untuk mengenal pasti responden kajian. Sebanyak 720 borang soal selidik telah diedarkan dan analisis berdasarkan 569 borang soal selidik yang boleh guna. Dua alatan statistik utama digunakan iaitu SPSS 21 dan Amos 21. Hasil kajian semasa menyokong tujuh daripada sembilan hipotesis. Keputusan akhir model struktur menunjukkan bukti bahawa hubungan antara motivasi tolak dengan keseluruhan kepuasan pelajar serta motivasi tarik dengan keseluruhan kepuasan pelajar disokong secara statistik. Selain itu, hubungan antara keseluruhan kepuasan pelajar dengan kesetiaan kepada HEI adalah signifikan. Peranan penyederhanaan modal sosial dan budaya institusi dengan motivasi tarik dan keseluruhan kepuasan pelajar juga disokong. Walau bagaimanapun, peranan penyederhanaan modal sosial dan budaya pelajar dengan motivasi tolak dan keseluruhan kepuasan pelajar pula tidak disokong. Hasil kajian membantu pemasar pengajian tinggi membangunkan strategi pemasaran untuk menarik pelajar-pelajar kolej dan menggalakkan kegigihan di HEI. Implikasi terhadap pengurusan turut dibincangkan, serta beberapa cadangan yang berpotensi untuk kajian pada masa depan juga dikenal pasti dan kesimpulan diberikan.

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## **CHAPTER 1**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1. Introduction**

Many reasons have led the higher education institutions (HEIs) to pay more attention in evaluating the overall students' satisfaction as intensive competition in the higher education sector (Joseph and Joseph, 1998; Baharun et al., 2009), higher expectation towards higher education institutions (Marzo-Navarro et al., 2005) and the liberalization of the private higher education institutions in many countries.

In tourism literature, most discussions have tended to revolve around the theory of push and pull motivation when they want to explain why people travel and choose a specific destination. The theory supposes that people are first of all pushed by internal desires to travel and then they are pulled by external or tangible factors. This research aims to applying push and pull theory in the higher education context. The study offers an integrated model of the push and pull theory and social and cultural concept to investigate the influence of social and cultural capital of student and higher education institution on student's push and pull motivation, satisfaction and loyalty.

Few researches have been conducted on the impact of social and cultural capital on choosing the higher education institutions. This work tries to explore the role of the student's social capital as habits and social relationships and the student's cultural capital as socioeconomic status, family support, and student abilities on students' motivation, satisfaction and loyalty. In addition, the role of HEI's social capital as corporate social responsibility, out-of-class experiences, and faculty-student interaction as well as HEI's cultural capital such as campus climate, HEI leadership and institutional support on the same three variables.

This work aims to analyse the elements that determine the students' satisfaction with private HEI's programs, and to analyse the relationship between the satisfaction experienced by the students and their loyalty to the institution.

## **1.2 Study Background**

Higher education faces common universal challenges forced by social, cultural, and economic factors. Among the high demands are restrictions on student places, accountability, and resource reduction (Altbach and Peterson, 1999). Higher education has changed dramatically in recent decades to meet both national and overseas demands. Each country has its own challenges and demands that need to be looked at within its own context.

However, there are many challenges facing higher education which has been noted. Higher education is complex in nature and it affects either directly or indirectly a variety of related fields of concern such as globalisation, marketization of education, lifelong learning, recognition, and quality.

Private higher education is growing in the whole world, in general, and in the Middle East, in particular. According to Al-Atiqi and Alharbi (2009), private higher education in Kuwait is expected to increase by 45,000 students which will exceed the enrolment of students in public university. The growth is also expected in Saudi Arabia, Oman, and Afghanistan (Shah and Lewis, 2010)

Since 1999, The Ministry of Higher Education has begun to facilitate the private sector of higher education in Saudi Arabia. It encouraged the investment in higher education in order to fulfil the shortage of places in public institutions, to response to emerging global trends, and to meet the constant changes in both global and regional landscapes of higher education.

Since 2004, private higher education has grown significantly in Saudi Arabia. The government framework and policies are correlated to higher education. The inability of state universities to meet the needs of the increasing population, and the student's low satisfaction have been key contributors to the growth in private institution and students'

participation in the private higher education institutions (MOHE, 2014). In 2013, the number of private higher education institutions has grown from one university in 1999 to ten in 2013, and from four colleges in 1999 to nineteen in 2013. The number of private higher education enrolments has also grown to 96,873 (6.3% of the total student population) (MOHE, 2013). Though private higher education students and the number of institutions has grown rapidly, however, there are critical issues on the overall student satisfaction and loyalty that need to be addressed.

The constructs of social and cultural capital are usually used in educational literature to illustrate how a person's activities and social groups are passed down status and behaviours across generations (Bourdieu, 1977; Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977; Dika and Singh, 2002). For Bourdieu (1986), social capital involves a person's membership in groups and social networks, while cultural capital is a form of knowledge that is not learned at school but is transmitted from the family to their children. Previous studies have used these constructs to explain the educational achievement of students from low socioeconomic status and students of colour (Cohen, 1992; Dyk and Wilson, 1999; Orr, 2003; Smith-Maddox, 1999; Sullivan, 2001).

In addition to social and cultural capital, push and pull motivation theory have been used in the area of international higher education and tourism. In the field of international education, the push and pull model help to explain the international flow of students from home states to host states (Agarwal and Winkler, 1985; Altbach, 1998; Lee and Tan, 1984; Li, 2006; Mazzarol and Soutar, 2001; Mazzarol et al., 2001; McMahon, 1992; Zwart, 2012; Rafi and Lewis, 2013). On the other hand, push and pull motivations in the tourism context assumed that people travel because they are pushed by internal drives and pulled by external factors (Uysal et al., 2008; Baloglu and Uysal, 1996; Bogari et al., 2003; You et al., 2000).

The purpose of this research is to investigate the relationship between the social and cultural capital of students and higher education institutions, push and pull motivation model, satisfaction, and loyalty. Understanding this relationship could help private higher education providers and marketers to create programs that support the academic achievement, overall student satisfaction and institution loyalty.

### 1.3 The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia: An Overview

#### 1.3.1 The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia: Brief Background

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) was founded in 1932 by King Abdulaziz Bin Saud. It is a developing country in the Middle East. The Kingdom occupies about four-fifth of the Arabian Peninsula, with a total area of approximately 2,000,000 square kilometres (CDSI, 2013). Saudi Arabia lies in a strategic and important position (Figure 1.1), located between Africa and mainland Asia, and is the biggest country in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). The official religion of the Kingdom is Islam and Arabic is the official language. Saudi law is derived from Islamic law (Shariah). The country consists of 13 local provinces, but with a centralized government, planning and financial systems.



**Figure 1.1:** Map of Saudi Arabia

In 2013, the population according to an estimate is approximately 29.1 million, about 68% are Saudis citizens and approximately 52% of the Saudi national population are male (CDSI, 2013) and 50% of them below the age of 25. It was 23.1 million at the end of 2005 and it is expected the total population of the Kingdom will exceed 30 million in 2015 (SAMA, 2011). The population growth rate of the Kingdom is 3.2% which is the highest among the nation's population growth.

The economy of KSA depends on the production and export of oil which was discovered in 1936. Saudi Arabia produces an estimated one-third of the world's total oil and has a third of the world's oil reserves. The oil wealth allowed the Kingdom to create

developmental plans and establish its infrastructure in general and higher education infrastructures in particular.

Significant attention has been paid to the education sector in order to raise the level of people's awareness and enhance the well-being of the nation. In conjunction with this, consideration has been given to the education sector in general and higher education sector particularly. Saudi Arabia provides free education from primary school to PhD degree, and according to the Education Policy of Saudi Arabia (1970) “education in all its forms and stages shall be free of charge and the government will not charge tuition fees”. To encourage Saudi students to pursue higher education, students at post-secondary institutions are given a monthly reward.

### **1.3.2 Higher Education in KSA**

The seeds of the first contemporary institution of tertiary education operating in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia was sown in the middle twentieth century. This has established Riyadh University now known as King Saud University (Saleh, 1986). It began in November 1957 with an enrolment of 21 students and a staff of nine. This was the first university created in Saudi Arabia. King Fahad bin Abdulaziz (Minister of Education) became Head of the new university and over the course of time educational advancement in Saudi Arabia improved dramatically.

The education system in the Kingdom consists of four stages, namely, elementary, intermediate, secondary and higher education. Higher education in KSA is provided by many institutions under the supervision of two main state agencies: the Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) and Technical and Vocational Training Corporation (TVTC).

The Ministry of Education supervised higher education until 1975 when the Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) was established (Saleh, 1986). MOHE is responsible for enforcing higher education policy and supervising the public and private universities and colleges, as well as creating undergraduate and postgraduate programs in most disciplines at these universities and colleges. In addition, it supervises scholarships for Saudi students who are pursuing courses overseas to help Saudi Arabia to fulfil its development plans (MOHE, 2014).

In 1980, the Technical and Vocational Training Corporation (TVTC) was established, with aims to spread technical and vocational education to meet the need of the labor market in Saudi Arabia (TVTC, 2014). Technical and Vocational Training Corporation is responsible for colleges of technology, girls higher technical institutes and vocational institutes. Either the Ministry of Higher Education or Technical and Vocational Training Corporation provide higher education for women in separated colleges and institutions. TVTC's colleges and institutes are categorized below the level of the bachelor's degree. In addition, there are specialized institutes and colleges for military and security education.

The financing of higher education in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is fully funded by the government. There are no tuition fees. Saudi students at post-secondary level received a monthly reward ranging from US \$220 to 280 (Alkhazim, 2003). In 2011, the budget for education and manpower has reached US \$39 billion from US \$25.1 billion in 2007 (researchandmarket.com, 2010). Every public university is allocated an annual budget, based on the common budgetary system applied to all country sectors, according to their plans and academic nature.

The Supreme Council of Higher Education (SCHE) considered the top authority for Saudi higher education, the King as its chairman. The basic responsibility of the SCHE is to regulate and oversee the higher education system at the local level and to unify its policies and regulations within the context of national strategies (MOHE, 2014). These include unified policies and regulations for faculties researchers, examinations, employment, etc. (Alkhazim, 2003). In addition, the centralized control of higher education has been an influence feature in the Kingdom administrative structure.

### **1.3.3 The Public Universities in Saudi Arabia**

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia includes both public and private higher education institutions. From 1957 until 2002, there were only eight public universities, serving eighteen million people (Al-Mubarak, 2011). Just over one decade, the number of public universities has increased to 25 universities, due to the rise in the rate and number of secondary- level graduates. The demand for higher education in Saudi Arabia is in a constant rise. According to the Saudi Ministry of Higher Education the number of students

in higher education (male and female) increased from just 60,000 in 1980 to 1,634,000 in 2013, multiplying by 27 times. In 2013, 50% of the registered students were female. The beginning of 2012/2013 academic year has seen 394,000 high school graduates enrolled in Saudi universities. Additionally, around 194,000 students are on scholarship sponsored by the Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) in universities all over the world including USA, UK, Australia and Canada. Hence, to meet the growing demand for higher education in the country, 25 state universities have been established.

By 2013, the number of public higher education institutions offering a variety of modern programs include 25 universities (consist of more than 400 colleges), 35 colleges of technology, 14 girls higher technical institutes, 4 colleges of Jubail and Yanbu, and one institute of public administration (MOHE, 2013). These institutions are spread regionally around almost all Saudi Arabia's 13 local provinces , to create a regional balance in national growth and to decrease pressure on the basic urban centers of Riyadh, Makkah and the Eastern province where 65,6% of the Saudi population is concentrated (SAMA, 2011).

Since 2007, the state Girls Colleges located in Riyadh have been converted to a new public university known as Princess Nora bint Abdulrahman University. In general, the number of female students is higher than the number of male students in Saudi higher education institutions, and this number is increasing every year. For instance, in 2008, the number of female students reached 390,974 and this number increased 6% during the year of 2009 (MOHE, 2009). From 2008 to 2013, the number of female students was larger than the number of male students.

#### **1.3.4 Studying Abroad**

The policy of studying abroad in Saudi Arabia began in early 1928 when fourteen students had been sent to Egypt to pursue higher education (Saleh, 1986). But the real springboard was in 1982 when the government sent 12,521 students abroad. The Arab states had precisely 898 students with the greatest focusing in Egypt with 667 students. Foreign countries had 11,623 with the greatest focusing in United States with 9,534 students (MOHE, 1982).

The King Abdullah Sponsorship Program is a ambitious program of scholarship which was launched in 2006. The Kingdom has targeted a wide range of study destinations from the West (USA, UK and Canada) as well as from the East (Japan, Malaysia, South Korea and Singapore). An approximate 250,000 students were sent to universities all over the world for eight years to pursue higher education with selective concentration on specific study majors of top priority to the development of the Kingdom national economy and society, such as medicine, engineering, science and information technology.

### **1.3.5 Private Higher Education Institutions in KSA**

All higher education institutions were public controlled and private higher education institutions were not allowed until 1999, when the government faced a shortage of places, so it encouraged the investment in higher education. The capacity of state universities in Saudi Arabia is limited compared with the dramatic increase of secondary school graduates. To overcome this challenge, the Ministry of Higher Education opened the door to private higher education institutions.

With the growing influence of globalization and the number of students applying for higher education, the number of private universities and colleges in Saudi Arabia also grew from one to ten universities and from four to nineteen by the end of 2013 (Table 1.1 and Table 1.2).

**Table 1.1:** Private Universities in KSA

<b>University</b>		<b>City</b>	<b>Launch</b>
Prince Sultan University	(PSU)	Riyadh	1999
Effat University		Jeddah	1999
The Arab Open University	(AOU)	Riyadh	2002
Al Yamamah University	(YU)	Riyadh	2003
University of Business and Technology	(UBT)	Jeddah	2003
Prince Mohammad Bin Fahd University	(PMU)	Al-Khobar	2006
Prince Fahad Bin Sultan University	(FBSU)	Tabuk	2006
Alfaisal University		Riyadh	2007
Dar Al Uloom University	(DAU)	Riyadh	2008
King Abdullah University of Science and Technology	(KAUST)	Jeddah	2009

Source: MOHE (2014)

**Table 1.2:** Private Colleges in KSA

College	City	Launch
Dar Al-Hekma College	Jeddah	1999
Prince Sultan College for Tourism and Business Abha	Abha	2000
Al-Baha Private College for Science (BOCS)	Al-Baha	2001
Dr. Soliman Fakeeh College of Nursing Medical Sciences	Jeddah	2003
Riyadh Colleges of Dentistry and Pharmacy (RCSDP)	Riyadh	2003
Ibn Sina National College for Medical Studies	Jeddah	2004
Qassim Private Colleges	Qassim	2005
Batterjee Medical College (BMC)	Jeddah	2006
Saad College of Nursing and Allied Health Sciences	Al-Khobar	2006
Al-Riyada College for Health Sciences	Jeddah	2006
Prince Sultan College for Tourism and Business Jeddah (PSCJ)	Jeddah	2007
Arab East Colleges	Riyadh	2007
Almaarefa College	Riyadh	2008
Buraydah Private Colleges (BPC)	Buraydah	2008
M. Almane Private College for Medical Studies	Al-Khobar	2008
Alfarabi College	Riyadh - Jeddah	2008
Al-Ghad International Health Sciences Colleges	Riyadh	2009
Sulaiman Al-Rajhi Colleges	Al Bukayriah	2009
Inaya Medical College	Riyadh	2011

Source: MOHE (2014)

The government encouraged the establishment of private higher education institutions constantly but the private sector faces several challenges. Firstly, the government does not allow for foreign universities to have bases or branches in Saudi Arabia. Secondly, it is difficult to convince students to join private institutions costing a

minimum of US \$8,000 yearly, while the public university provides not only free education but also pays rewards (Alkhazim, 2003).

#### **1.4 Statement of Problem**

In a universal competitiveness environment, clients are becoming more aware of their behavioral intentions to purchase a product or service from specific brands to meet their desires and needs. Hence, the survival of the service provider depends on the client's demand for their service. Therefore, it is crucial to the marketers and managers to assess precisely the clients' brand perceptions to predict the acceptance of the universal brand in the market and expansion of a type of competitive privilege that will sustain for a long period.

Boosted globalization has generated a strong growth in the internationalization of customer and service market. The more the international markets grow; the higher will the satisfaction standard be. Hence, this will affect the customers' decisions. Consequently, consumers' judgment to evaluate the service quality is essential in the evaluation. Higher education institutions are realising that higher education could be as a business-like service industry and they are beginning to giving more attention on meeting or even exceeding the needs of college students (Gruber et al., 2010). As students are increasingly seen as consumers of higher education services, their satisfaction should be crucial to private higher education institutions that want to delight current students or recruit new students (Thomas and Galambos, 2004). The positive development in higher education services shows the importance of private higher education institutions understanding overall student satisfaction which play a critical role in students' retention and enrolment at private college or university.

As mentioned by Alves and Raposo (2009), identifying the factors that impact student satisfaction is critical for educational institutions. However, there is a lack of consensus in the existing literature as to how this can be achieved and previous studies employ models that vary in terms of the number of dimensions considered and the methodologies used to investigate the strengths and significance of the relationship (Douglas et al., 2006; Nasser et al., 2008; Al-Alak, 2007; Osoian et al., 2010; Parasuraman et al., 1988; Elliott and Shin, 2002; Gruber et al., 2010). ). Although, the satisfaction concept has been extended recently to the context of higher education, the still limited

amount of study suggests that student satisfaction is a complex concept, consisting of several dimensions (Richardson, 2005; Marzo-Navarro et al., 2005). This study aims to provide a clearer guide as to what are the strongest drivers of student satisfaction within a university setting, and whether a focus on moderation effect of social and cultural capital of student and higher education institution.

The private higher education has grown dramatically in Saudi Arabia in the last ten years. The government framework and policies are correlated to higher education. The incapability of public higher education institutions to meet the needs of the increasing population, and the student's low satisfaction have been key factors to the growth in private institutions and students' participation in the private higher education institutions (MOHE, 2014). In 2013, the number of private higher education institutions has increased from one university in 1999 to ten in 2013, as well as from four colleges in 1999 to nineteen in 2013. The total number of students enrolled in higher educational institutions in Saudi Arabia stood at 1,537,941 in 2013, of which 96,873 students (6.3 per cent) are enrolled at the private higher education institutions (MOHE, 2013). Though private higher education students and the number of institutions have grown rapidly, however, there are critical issues on the overall student satisfaction and loyalty that need to be investigated.

Official statistics show that a large number of students enrol in private higher education institutions every year. Many factors lead them to choose a specific college, one of these are the social and cultural capital of the students (Horvat, 1997; Nora, 2004) and social and cultural capital of the institution (Hayes, 1989). In the higher education institutions, the participation of students are from diverse social and cultural background. Therefore, they carry with them social, cultural, and educational capital that have an impact on their choice of college, motivation, and overall satisfaction. In addition, to the best of the researcher's knowledge there is no study that examined the influence of social and cultural capital of student and institution on the relationship between push-pull motivations and overall student satisfaction as a moderator variable.

Although numerous studies have been conducted to investigate the impact of one or more component of social and cultural capital on college students in First World Countries and emerging countries (Carbonaro, 1998; Dyk and Wilson, 1999; Isreal et al., 2001; Dumais, 2002; Hossler et al., 1999; Nora and Cabrera, 1996; Manski and Wise, 1983; Tuttle, 1981; Pascarellas and Terenzini, 1991; Kuh et al., 2005; Lundberg and Schreiner, 2004; George, 2007; Shelton, 2008; Strayhorn and Terrell, 2007), but there is no study that investigates the impact of social and cultural capital as a whole on college

students in the developing countries on the relation between push and pull motivation and students satisfaction.

In overseas higher education, push and pull motivation have been investigated by many studies (Agarwal and Winkler, 1985; Altbach, 1998; Lee and Tan, 1984; Li, 2006; Mazzarol and Soutar, 2001; Mazzarol et al., 2001; McMahon, 1992; Zwart, 2012; Rafi and Lewis, 2013) to explain the international students' flow from home countries to host countries in a global context. Since, the domestic application need more experimental studies, therefore this study attempts to determine the student push motivation and higher education institution pull motivations that fuelled students to choose the private institutions.

Higher education institutions can play a crucial role in the success of their students. They can serve as transmitters of the social and cultural capital required within the campus climate; they can help as counsellors inviting them into the culture of the academy; and they can serve as guides through the unobserved curriculum of the academy. The constant interaction of students with the faculty may help to reduce the negative effect of their lack of knowledge and pre-college characteristics on their higher education experience.

As a society, there are many challenges related with diversity. The colleges and universities are not isolated from this challenge, thus, the responsibility of higher education institutions to supportive environment for all students is primary, as well as more consideration should be given to comprehend student's areas of satisfaction of diverse social and cultural capital. The requirement to understand motivation and satisfaction of student is crucial as it provides a contextual foundation to serve student persistence and success in higher education institution. In addition, these fields of researches should include an in-depth study for institution administration and staff to comprehend what areas are of high priority and what fields require improvement within the diverse students' social and cultural capital.

During difficult times, higher education institutions require a minimum enrolment of 1000 students to be financially viable (Bolda and Bruce, 1983). Private higher education institutions face difficulty competition with state institutions on price. Porter (1980) pointed out that service quality can be a successful alternative approach instead of competing on price to accomplish a sustainable competitive advantage. For that, private

institutions need to understand what factors could contribute to students' satisfaction which are related to institution loyalty.

After reviewing previous studies which have given much attention on students motivation and satisfaction, there are several areas that have not yet been addressed. Firstly, research has not examined the moderator effects of the social and culture of students on the relationship between push motivation and overall student satisfaction. Secondly, research has not investigated the moderator effects of social and cultural capital of higher education institution on the linkage between pull motivation and overall student satisfaction.

Thus, the current study extends the existing body of knowledge referred to college students behaviour in the developing countries to understand the underlying constructs of students' motivation and satisfaction when influenced by social and cultural capital. The main problem to be addressed in this study is to investigate empirically the influence of social and cultural capital of student and higher education institution on the students' behaviour toward their institution choice motivation, overall satisfaction and higher education institution loyalty. The present study attempts to give a clear picture and build on the lack of empirical evidence by developing an integrative model to examine the moderation role of social and cultural capital of student and HEI in the relationship among push and pull motivations and overall student satisfaction.

## **1.5 Research Objectives**

The main research objective is:

**“To propose a model to understand students' behaviour focusing on social and cultural capital of students and higher education institutions and on the relation between institution choice motivation, overall student satisfaction and loyalty”.**

From this main objective the researcher can inspire the detailed research objectives:

1. To explore the social and cultural capital of students and HEIs that satisfy the needs of students.
2. To investigate the important push factors of student motivation.
3. To investigate the important pull factors of HEI motivations.
4. To determine the possible direct causal effect of push motivations on student satisfaction.
5. To determine the possible direct causal effect of pull motivations on student satisfaction.
6. To investigate the moderating effect of the social and cultural capital of student and HEI on the relationship between motivation and student satisfaction.
7. To determine the effect of student satisfaction on HEI loyalty.

## 1.6 Research Questions

The main problem to be addressed in this study can be summarized in the following research question:

**“To what extent do social and cultural capital of student and higher education institution affect students’ behaviour toward their institution choice motivation, overall satisfaction and HEI loyalty?”.**

From this main research question, there are several research sub-questions as follows:

RQ1 What type of social and cultural capital of student and HEI satisfy students?

RQ2 What push factors of student motivation are important to students?

RQ3 What pull factors of HEI motivation are important to student?

RQ4 What are the effects of push factors on overall student satisfaction?

RQ5 What are the effects of pull factors on overall student satisfaction?

RQ6 To what extent do the social and cultural capital of student and HEI affect the relationship between motivation (push / pull) and student’s satisfaction?

RQ7 What is the effect of overall student satisfaction on the HEI loyalty?

## **1.7 Research Significance**

There are some important significances for both theory and practice in this study.

### **1.7.1 Knowledge**

The primary significance of this study is the development of a theoretical framework that connect between student motivation, overall student satisfaction, higher education institution loyalty, and social and cultural capital for a better understanding of student's behaviour.

The study empirically investigates a new area of research, which is social and cultural capital of student and higher education institution. This research identified the social and cultural of higher education institution, which may satisfy college students. The identified social and cultural capital of higher education institution and their components can be used in advancing the research on social and cultural capital of higher education institution concern in Arabic countries similar to that of Saudi Arabia, and enable comparative researches in other countries.

This study develops a theoretical model based on the theory of push and pull motivation by adding the social and cultural capital of student as well as social and cultural capital of HEI constructs as a moderator variables between student motivation and overall student satisfaction. Such addition of social and cultural capital of student and HEI to the theory may be considered a significance, which will open a new area of future study.

The push and pull motivation theory, as a method of analysis for this research is used a lot in tourism motivation but it is not utilized enough in the higher education service marketing studies. For that, the adaption of this study may provide some guidelines for it to be included in this context. In addition, The social and cultural capital construct, as a method of investigation for this study is argued a lot in the sociology of education but it is not fully applied in the marketing research of higher education service. Therefore, the adoption of this research may offer some guidelines in this field.

The current study identifies the most important push motivation factors to students, which drive them to choose HEI for studying. Examining the relationship between factors and overall student satisfaction helps in the understanding of the efforts of push motivational factors on the overall student satisfaction and how they provide better overall satisfaction. Moreover, this study addresses the most important pull factors of higher education institution which attracts them to choose specific higher education institution for studying. Investigation of the relationship between pull factors and overall student satisfaction helps in the comprehension of the effects of pull factors of higher education institution on overall student satisfaction and how they contribute to better realize overall student satisfaction.

The study investigates the relationship between the overall student satisfaction and institution loyalty, which have not been studied before in Saudi higher education context. This linkage may be considered as additional evidence, which supports that the overall student satisfaction has an influence on higher education institution loyalty.

### **1.7.2 Managerial and Practical Implications**

This study offers some practical insights for service providers in higher education institutions to successfully satisfy students. In addition, leaders and marketers of colleges and universities may be able to create more effective strategies by understanding how concepts like student motivation, social and cultural capital, student satisfaction and HEI loyalty related to each other. Higher education marketers may be encouraged to devise creative programs based on the unique characteristics of student to satisfy and delight them.

The study determines the most important push and pull motivational factors for college student. Therefore, higher education marketers should focus more on push motivational factors to make it more satisfying and appealing to their students. Additionally, this study identified important pull motivational factors for college and university students. Thus, it is recommended that higher education leaders and marketers should give more attention to these factors to attract college students and enhance their satisfaction.

There are many social and cultural discrepancies in Arabic and Islamic countries, so the study determines these unique characteristics which might help managers to design creative programmes and techniques appropriate to Arabic and Islamic students.

The knowledge which gains from this study can help administrators of HEIs to identify what are the determinants for the overall students' satisfaction and HEI loyalty. This indicates that satisfied students will continue studying at the college or university and will encourage these students to recommend the higher education institutions to other people.

## **1.8 Research Scope**

This research greatly focuses on the marketing area of the higher education service. The study concentrates on the investigation of Saudi students' satisfaction, as a representative to developing countries, toward private higher education. Saudi Arabia supplies a meaningful location for the present study because the private higher education has grown dramatically in Saudi Arabia. The choice was made partially convenient but also because the researcher found that there is a lack of empirical research that investigates the students' satisfaction toward private higher education in Middle East and in developing countries. The combination of Saudi Arabia with other countries is regarded as the Middle East and developing country.

Another important limitation of the study is the samples. The samples are from private higher education institutions in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia including both male and female students. The sample size is including seventeen private higher education institutions in two Saudi's big cities; eight institutions in Riyadh, and nine institutions in Jeddah. Riyadh and Jeddah made up of 70% of the total number of private higher education institutions in Saudi Arabia (MOHE, 2013). The target sample is relatively small (569) compared to the total number of students in HEIs. However, the validity of the data is sufficient to a general idea on the impact of social and cultural capital of student and HEI on student's motivation, satisfaction and loyalty.

The next limitation is related to the selection of the push motivation as a method for predicting the relationship between student's social and cultural capital and student

motivation as well as the selection of the pull motivation as a method for predicting the relationship between HEI's social and cultural capital and student motivation.

Ultimately, the research concentrates only on two capitals, the first is the social and cultural capital of student and the second is the social and cultural capital of higher education institution.

## 1.9 Operational Definitions

A number of terms will be used frequently in this study. It is important to define briefly these terms to ensure more clarification. All the following constructs domain in the context of higher education.

- **Social capital:** it refers to the attributes of social organization such as networks, social trust, and norms (Putnam, 1995) that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual privilege between college students and higher education institution.
- **Cultural capital:** defines as certain types of prior knowledge, abilities, and language forms which taught or inherited from family and environment (Apple, 1990) as related to college student's social class status.
- **Higher education institution:** is a private institution of higher education that awards a bachelor's degree not less than four year program offered by a college or university.
- **Motivation:** is an individual drive of student by adaption push and pull motivation. The student is first of all pushed by the internal desire to pursue higher education and then he is pulled by the attributes of higher education institution.
- **Satisfaction:** college student satisfaction is the difference between an individual's expectations about the outcome of a learning process in college or

university before experiencing the process and the actual outcome as perceived by the individual.

- **Loyalty:** is a deeply held commitment to rebuy a preferred product or service consistently in the future (Oliver, 1997). It is a deeply held commitment to pursue and continue in a preferred higher education institution. Loyalty to the college or university appears in several ways, such as recommending the college to friends and acquaintances, attending the same college if starting anew, or attending new courses or further education at the college after graduation.
- **Habits:** are the natural ways that college student understand and interact with university colleagues and faculty staff, i.e. listen to the views of others, and method of learning. The family considers the primary generator of habits and it is through habits that a student's relations with others and society are shaped.
- **Social relationships:** refers to any interaction between two or more students within the campus of higher education institution, as well as the relations between college student and the college communities and activities, i.e. cultural activities, and sport activities.
- **Family support:** all kinds of support which the student have received from his family to succeed in studying at higher education institution such as, encouragement to pursue higher education, choosing a suitable private higher education institution, and getting the degree.
- **Socioeconomic status:** is a sociological and economic composited total measure of a student and his family's social and economic status in relation to others, based on income, education, and occupation (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977). In addition, socioeconomic status is categorized into three levels, high SES, middle SES, and low SES. The three categories will depict which category the student and family may fall into.
- **Student ability:** an acquired or natural skills of college student which enable him to achieve the academic goals. For instance, mental ability and leadership ability. The ability involves inherent competence for learning, understanding, or performing.

- **Corporate social responsibility:** is the continuing commitment by college or university to behave ethically and contribute to the economic development while improving the quality of life of the students and their families, as well as of the local community and society at large (Holme and Watts, 2000). The CSR's activities of higher education institution may include; scholarships, volunteer activities, and awareness programme to community members.
- **Out-of-class experience:** defined as activities in which students engage during the undergraduate study that are either directly or indirectly related to their learning and performance and occur outside the formal classroom, studio, or laboratory setting (Kuh et al., 1994). Out-of-class experience includes many activities but this study have pre-determined participation in campus clubs and societies exhibitions, and non-academic performances.
- **Faculty-student interaction:** refers to faculty members' (instructors and officers) connection with students. This interaction is illustrated by faculty's engagement with students in their classes and outside classes that enhances the learning experience. Examples of activities include using e-mail in communication, discussion the grades or assignment with instructor, receiving feedback from faculty officers or working with members on non-academic activities.
- **College experience:** refers to knowledge, fact, or skills of personal encountering or undergoing within the four year college study period. For instance, the college prepares students for future career, gaining all the basic knowledge in student's major course, or making personal and academic relation with college friends.
- **Campus climate:** defined as the present behaviours, attitudes, and standards of college, administrators, instructors, and students regarding the level of respect for personal needs and abilities.
- **HEI leadership:** is the top management of private university or college which motivates their staff and students to act towards achieving the HEI's goals. The leadership of HEI provides the aid and support of students in the accomplishment of success in education and workplace. Examples of HEI leadership activities include establishing vision, plans, and decision.

- **Institutional support:** is referred to all kinds of support or aid offers by administration, officers, or instructors to help college students to succeed academically.
- **Campus visit:** is a visit of a private university or college's campus before the student decides to enrol. Prospective student participates in campus visit to learn about the private university or college's facilities, culture on campus, academics and programs offered by the institution.

### 1.10 Abbreviations

This study describes instrument and data analysis by using abbreviations. These include the following:

PUSM: Push motivations

PULM: Pull motivations

OSS: Overall student satisfaction

HEIL: Higher education institution loyalty

SCCS: Social and cultural capital of student

SCCI: Social and cultural capital of institution

IO: Influence by others

SI: Social interaction

SS: Social status

FC: Future Career

PO: Personal Objectives

LE: Learning environment

ATI: Academic and teaching issues

FAC: Facilities

PR: Personal recommendation

AF: Administrative factors

FCI: Financial and cost issues

SR: Social relationship

HB: Habits

FS: Family support

SES: Socioeconomic status  
 SA: Student abilities  
 CSR: Corporate social responsibility  
 OCE: Out-of-class experience  
 FSI: Faculty-student interaction  
 CEX: College experience  
 CC: Campus climate  
 HL: HEI leadership  
 IS: Institutional support  
 CV: Campus visit

### 1.11 Organization of the Thesis

This study is divided into five chapters as follows:

- Chapter 1:** Presentation of study background, facts about the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, public and private higher education in Saudi Arabia, statement of problem, research objectives, research questions, research significance, research scope, and provides operational definitions as well as meaning of abbreviations.
- Chapter 2:** Relevant literature review about choosing higher education institution, higher education motivation, motivation theories, social and cultural capital of student, social and cultural capital of higher education institution, student satisfaction, and institution loyalty.
- Chapter 3:** Explanation of the research methodology which included; sampling design, survey instrument, data analysis, and statistical analysis.
- Chapter 4:** Presentation of data and analysis. The analysis method contains; data frequencies, descriptive analysis, outliers, normality, validity, factor analysis, correlation and regression analysis were conducted using SPSS 21. While, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), measurement model, structural model and path analysis were conducted using AMOS 21.
- Chapter 5:** The discussion of key study findings, research contribution to the knowledge, practical implication, research limitation, and future research.

## **1.12 Summary**

The first chapter introduced the importance of social and cultural capital and how it is necessary for managers and marketers to realize how it can influence students' motivation, satisfaction, and loyalty. Moreover, the increase of globalization has created dramatic changes in higher education both nationally and internationally. Each country has its own challenges and demands that need to be looked at within its own context. This chapter also introduced the importance of understanding the relationship between the social and cultural capital, push and pull motivation, overall student satisfaction, and HEI loyalty. The purpose of this study is to investigate the moderating effect of social and cultural capital of student and institution on the relationship between push and pull motivations and overall student satisfaction. In order to achieve the purpose, this study aims to understand the college student's perception of private higher education in Saudi Arabia as a representative for developing countries. The study background, facts about the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, public and private higher education in Saudi Arabia, statement of problem, research objectives, questions, significance, and scope and operational definitions were presented within this chapter.

The rest of the thesis is organized as follows; Chapter 2 discusses the relevant literature review which is related to the study and the theoretical framework. Meanwhile, Chapter 3 the research methodology and the findings of the study were presented in Chapter 4. Finally, Chapter 5 provides the discussion and conclusion of this study.

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